

THE JUNIOR AMERICANS



FRANK GORDON OLIVER

**THE
JUNIOR
AMERICANS**

OLIVER

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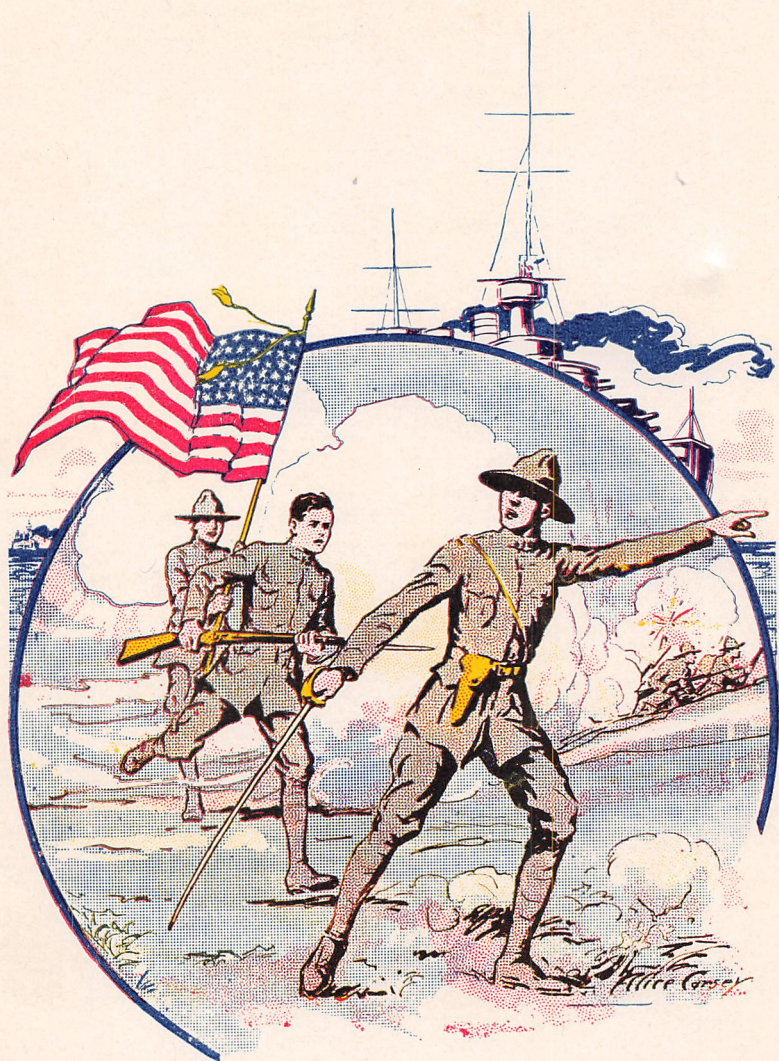
Harold Lee Sangster

Burke, Va.



AMBITION
BOOKS THAT PLEASE
BY
FRANK GORDON OLIVER

THE TITLES ARE
THE CIRCUS BOYS
—
THE ATHLETIC BOYS
—
THE JUNIOR AMERICANS



The Junior Americans

BY

FRANK GORDON OLIVER

Author of "The Athletic Boys," "The Circus Boys," etc., etc.

Sail on, O Union, strong and Great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate.

LONGFELLOW.

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TO MY BRAVE BOY-READERS

BRITISH AND AMERICAN

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH EVERY KINDLY WISH

BY THEIR TRUE FRIEND

THE AUTHOR

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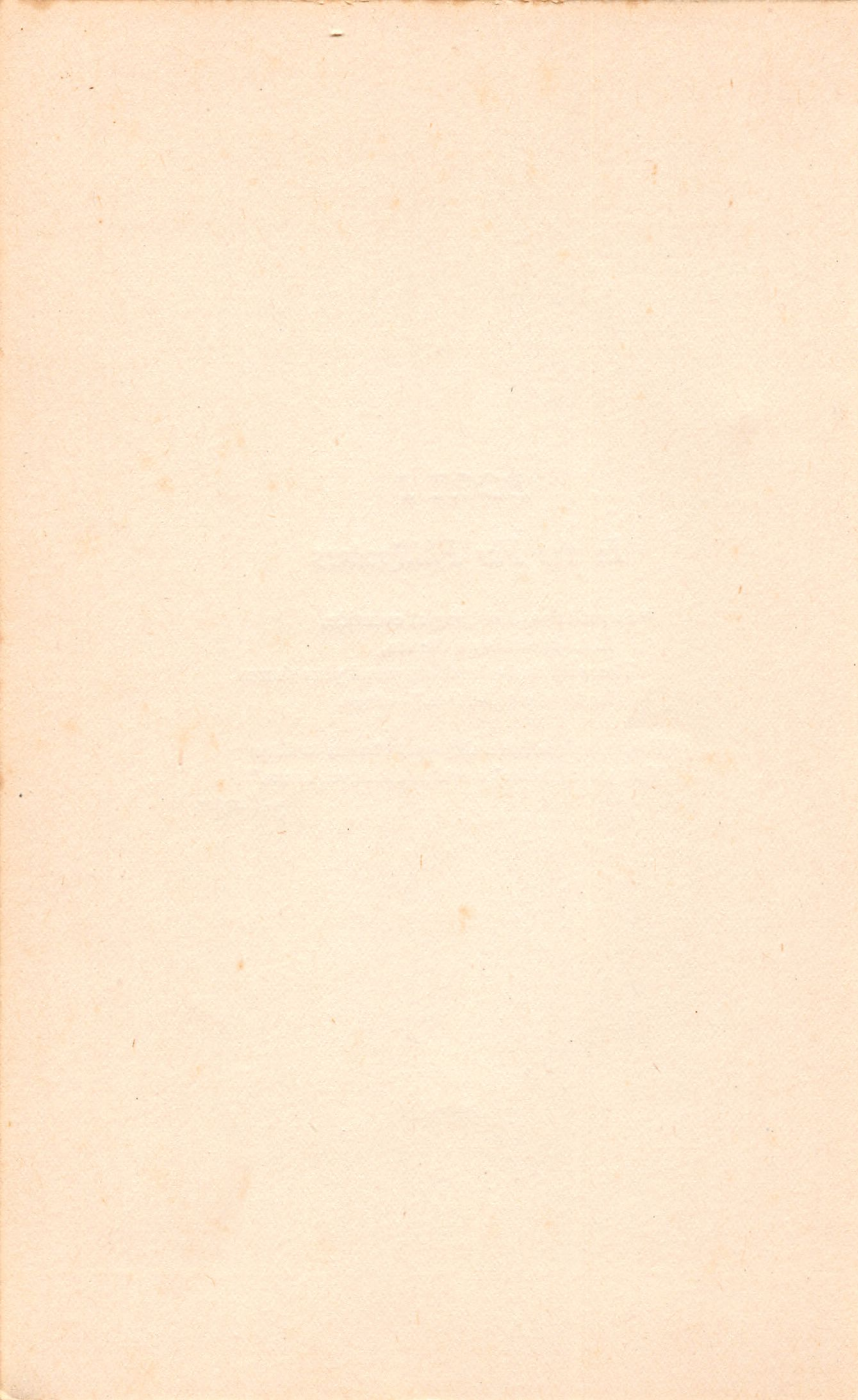
BOOK I

In the Far Philippines

"Sweet Isles, that hang at eventide,
Like emeralds on the sea,
The wild birds shrieking round your shores
Invite you to be free."—*Anon.*

"For, Freedom has a thousand charms to show
That slaves, howe'er contented, never know."

—*Cowper.*



The Junior Americans

CHAPTER I

"I shall give my sword to my country"

"I was born an American; I live an American; I shall die an American."—*Webster.*

"Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam.
His first, best, country ever is at home."—*Goldsmith.*

"Do you know, Teddy," said Desmond, as he and his friend lounged together on the quarter-deck of the bold, big yacht Bonito, "do you know that a father like mine is a great acquisition."

He looked very thoughtful as he spoke; his head was just a trifle on one side and his eyes were on the sea.

Desmond was in the habit of making strange remarks at times, and though he was barely thirteen, these were usually couched in what may be called book English.

"A *great* acquisition," he repeated, emphasising the adjective "great."

"How long have you had him, Dess?" said Ted, with a right merry twinkle in his eye.

This brought Desmond up with a round turn. He shifted his chair a little and laughed—at himself.

"But, really, you know," he replied, "I some-

times think I am far older than father, a hundred years at least. But isn't father good and nice?"

"He's an angel on earth, Dess, and that's just telling ye, though—" Teddy scratched his head and looked a trifle puzzled.

"Though what, Teddy?"

"Troth it's the big beard I was thinking about. But I daresay, my boy, angels can wear what they like."

"But," added Ted, as Desmond made no immediate answer, "I wish I had a father or a mother, either for the matter o' that, though only a year ago I—I——"

He got no farther. It was evident there was a lump in his throat, and the tears stood in his Irish eyes. Bluer than the sea were they.

"Hush! Hush! brother," said Desmond, laying one hand kindly on his friend's knee.

"Hush! Teddy, didn't daddy promise to be a father to both of us, and don't you think his heart is large enough?"

"Sure, sure, and it's yourself that's right. You're wiser than me. There's fifteen years old I am and the biggest fool ever born in a bog."

He dashed the back of his hand almost angrily across his eyes as he spoke, as if mortally ashamed of the tears that had threatened to fall.

"Oh! Teddy, I wouldn't be ashamed of wet eyes. Why, I myself wept a piece when I bade mother and siss good-bye in dear old Cuba."

"True for you, Dess, but you are only a boy. I'm a man."

"Yes, you're a man, and I mean to be one too, and I feel that this sailor life is helping to make me one."

"Good, Dessie, good, for the honour of old Ireland let us both be men, the whole lot of the two of us."

"And America. Don't forget I'm American born, though I've lived much in the sorrowful land, as you call it sometimes, Teddy."

Teddy laughed good-naturedly. "Dess," he said, "you're Irish and sorra a thing else, and it's Irish you'd be if you'd been born in the moon. If I put a dozen duck's eggs under a turkey, is it Turks or turkeys either, that'll be finding their way, some fine mornin', out of the shells. Be quiet with ye, Dess, with your America and all that."

"Teddy, listen," said Desmond, "America is my father's adopted country, though he owns both house and lands in Ireland. My father's adopted country, and my mother's. I am American-born, and sister too, and I love every acre and inch of the country from the wild rocky mountains where bears and pumas prowl across its vast extent to the shores that are washed by the waves of the wild Atlantic. And listen again—there is going to be war, bloody war, Ted, between our land and the cruel and dastardly Spaniards. By the time that war comes, I shall be years older, perhaps a man of

fifteen like you; and, Ted—*I shall give my sword to my country.*”

He had stood up as he spoke, his eyes flashed and his hard little fist quivered in the air.

But he had not noticed his big brown-bearded father coming up behind him on tiptoe, had no knowledge of his presence on deck in fact, until he was seized by the sides and lifted right up about a mile high, more or less, into the air.

“Bravo! my son,” cried Captain Adeane, “Bravo! Going to give your sword to your country? Ha, ha, ha. How proud America will be! But, there, lad, sit down again. A boy’s heroics don’t often count for much, but I’m not going to discourage you. There may be something in them—sometimes.” Desmond blushed the colour of a well-boiled lobster and sank into his seat.

“Nay, lad, there’s nothing to be ashamed of. Your ancestors never hung head before the swords and spears of the perfidious Saxons who invaded Green Erin and tried to trample our manhood in the dust. The same blood runs in your veins, boy. There! I won’t flatter you, but you’ve got your mother’s kindly heart, and you’ve got the grit and sand in your system; never lose your head nor let pathos and enthusiasm carry you away, and you’ll do right well. But I’m not a preaching father. Am I?”

“No, daddy dear, I’m sure you’re not.”

“Well, away up into the foretop with you both,

and look out for a ship or for squalls, or anything you like."

The boys started to their feet.

"Half a minute, lads. Teddy you'll take the weather ratlines, Dess the lee, because he's lighter. Stand on deck by the rigging till I fire a pistol, then up you swarm and I'll give half a sovereign to the one who is first up. No going through the lubber-hole though. The race must be ship-shape and Bristol fashion."

The pistol rang out on the morning air, and in two seconds or less, a shrill "Hooray!" in a falsetto voice, proved that young Desmond had won.

Rattle, rattle, rattle, up the companion! Bowff, wowff, wowff!

And immediately after two more figures stood on the quarter-deck, beside or rather confronting the captain, not to mention the dog.

"In the name of mystery what's happened?" cried his Reverence Mr. McDowney.

"Been shooting sharks, sir?" cried the doctor.

Bowff, wowff, barked Charley Chat. There's some sport on and you haven't told me. Wowff!

The captain laughed heartily.

"You're all wrong together," he said. "I was only giving those two young rascals a race up the rigging, and now they're in the foretop having the romance blown out of them."

"Ah! indeed then," said his reverence, the priest, "you'll never do that as far as Dess is concerned,

and it isn't myself that would wish it. What were youth without its day-dreams and its castles in the air?"

"What, indeed?" said Surgeon Ramsay, who had a habit of agreeing with the good priest in almost everything he gave utterance to.

Yet in appearance, no two men could have been much more different than Ramsay and the good priest McDowney. The latter was fully forty, thickset and somewhat swart in countenance. He had a thin-lipped, determined face, but a kindly look in his eyes that told of the goodness of his heart. When that face was at rest the expression thereon was rather sad than otherwise, as if he were wont to muse on the sorrows of the world; but, as a rule when he spoke, it was so merry that merriment went scintillating off it and all round the mess. It is very few indeed who have the power to make others happy, but McDowney possessed it in the highest degree.

Ramsay was a young, fair-haired Yorkshire man, as handsome as paint, as sailors say, and just as strong, erect and broad in beam as you find them up in Yorkshire, and maybe nowhere else in England. Captain Adeane had picked him off an Atlantic greyhound. He had been across and across many times, and had got tired of such short voyages. He used to say one could pitch a biscuit from Liverpool to New York.

So patriotic was Adeane that I do not think he

would have engaged the services of a Sassenach had he not found out, in conversing with Ramsay, that his ancestors had been Scotch and Irish. But he never repented his choice of a doctor.

The engineers were Scotch, but with these as exceptions, every soul on board belonged to bonnie Erin. And a whole-souled, hearty crew they made; forty all told were they, and quite old-fashioned in a manner of speaking, for with the concurrence of Captain Adeane and his Reverence, they kept Saturday nights at sea—the main brace being invariably spliced, that they could sing songs, spin yarns and toast their *wives* and sweethearts. There was always a jolly supper in the galley and half-deck that evening, and this served to make up for the semi-starvation of their Fridays, for on these days nothing but fish—fresh if they could find it, salt if not—was served out.

The Bonito was a happy ship, because she had a happy, good-natured skipper and mates as well who, although they *would* have work and duty done, never bullied or shouted angrily at their men. Thus punishment was unknown on board.

They had been three months out from Havana, on the beautiful Isle of Cuba, and here they were only yet some distance to the southward of Madagascar.

The Bonito was a steamer, it is true, and strong, swift and sturdy at that. Nevertheless Captain Adeane had *not* hurried. He was a man who liked

to take things easy, and because he hated the grind and grime and greasy odour of revolving engines, he had sailed pretty nearly all the way.

The saloon mess consisted only of the captain himself, the priest or tutor, the surgeon and the two youngsters. Add to these "Charlie Chat," the bulldog, "Cheese," a most marvellous and wise half-bred Persian tabby cat, and you have a complete list of the officers aft, unless you care to count the black steward, who, arrayed in robes of white, glided in and out all day long, a most faithful servitor from the captain's estate and "*hacienda*" in Cuba.

"Well," said the priest, on the present occasion, "I shall get my pupils down and go in for some French lessons."

"I say, father," said the captain, smiling, "why not go up. There's room, you know."

"Sure, I never thought of such a thing. I'll try, though I'm no great climber."

The priest was dressed in the very lightest of white suits, only he would always stick to his clerical hat, which made him look somewhat droll. Away he went, and crawled hesitatingly up the rigging as far as the lubber-hole. The sailors below had great fun at his ungainly motions, which were more like those of a lobster crawling up a rock than a man on the ratlines.

The boys helped him through and he made himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit,

and proceeded to converse with his pupils in French, but he secretly vowed a vow that no power on earth or on the ocean blue, should ever get him up into the foretop again.

* * * * *

Up and down the quarter-deck, up and down and up and down walked the captain and his surgeon. Both were sailors, both had their sea legs, and no motion could have affected them.

They were very friendly, these two, and ever and anon their ringing laughter came floating up and fell upon the ears of the lads and their tutor in the foretop.

At last they seated themselves on deck chairs on the weather side.

The mate stood near to the man at the wheel taking a glance now and then into the binnacle, just from force of habit, for the ship was on a beam wind, if wind it could be called, and every inch of canvas was set.

The captain—he was both captain and owner of the brave Bonito—pulled out his cigar-case and smilingly held it toward the doctor.

The doctor was not much of a smoker, but he couldn't refuse a pure Havana.

There was a button in the sky-light close to where the two friends sat in their comfortable hammock-chairs. It was nearer to the captain and he touched it.

Then came the tinkle of a bell from below and soon the white-robed steward came up. He walked erect and stately, as many black men do.

"Sah to you, sah?" (Sir to you, sir.)

"Iced water and limes, Pedro."

"Yes sah, suttainly. Sugah? All right."

"Now," said Captain Adeane, when the steward had brought the tumblers, and the smoke from the cigars went curling up and formed a cloud beneath the awning. "Now, doctor, this is what I call enjoying the *dolce far niente*."

"It is delightful, and now would just be the time for you to tell—and for me to enjoy listening to—the story of your career that you promised."

"Well, it must be very brief, Ramsay, for I'm but a poor hand at spinning a yarn."

Just as he was finishing his story, Captain Adeane saw the boys hurrying aft, and both seemed on the eve of splitting their sides with the laughter they were trying in vain to suppress.

"O, father!" cried Desmond, "I want to tell you that—that—ha! ha! ha!"

"My dear boy," said Captain Adeane, "what is the matter; have you been bitten by a tarantula or what?"

"Och, it's like this, sir," said Teddy, merrily, "the holy father, the priest, came up into the foretop and the sorra an inch of him can get down again."

It was the captain's turn to smile now.

"Well, we'll soon manage that," he said, "we'll

try block and tackle and have him below in a brace of shakes."

The first mate, a tall and hirsute sailor had drawn near to listen.

"Mr. Stapleton," said Captain Adeane, turning toward him, "you hear the fix the poor priest is in; see what you can do."

"Ay, ay, sir. Watch forward there! Lay aft half a dozen of you."

The men made one eager rush toward the quarter-deck, and as soon as matters were explained to them, off they ran and disappeared below, with what result we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

By Sea and Land

"Adieu, adieu! my native land
Fades o'er the waters blue."—*Byron.*

"Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime,
Where the eye of the vulture, the love of the turtle
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime."—*Byron.*

EVERYTHING was soon ready, and the mate himself, out of courtesy to the priest, went aloft with two of his best men to carry the gear.

It was soon made fast, the priest looking on with some degree of trepidation.

But when it was explained to him by Mr. Stapleton that he had only to put his limbs through the bight of the rope, and clutch it above, he was completely staggered.

"What!" he cried, "is it sit in a rope? No, no, no, sure, I'd sooner sit here till the crack of doom."

"Well," cried a broad-shouldered sailor, "well, sorr, if it's on to me back ye'll be after coming, with yer hands around me neck, troth it is down the rat-lines I'll slip wid yer Reverence, and be on deck before ye can say binnacle."

"Foolhardy! foolhardy! my good friends, nay, nay, leave me alone in my misery."

"But, my dear sir," said the mate, "a squall may come at any moment, and then it's into the sea you'll be pitched with small ceremony!"

"And it's a nate little dinner the sharks'll be having, father," said the sailor.

The priest groaned, and gazed fearfully around him at the beautiful sea.

Then the mate had a happy thought.

"A big sack," he cried, "there are plenty of them below. Down you, Tip, my lad, and bring the biggest and strongest biscuit sack you can find."

The man was speedily back, but I fear there was a roguish smile in his eye as he handed the mate the bag.

The priest began to tremble.

"Oh!" he cried, "pray, say, if—if—it is safe, my dear mate. This is a terrible danger!"

"Arrah! be aisy wid ye father," said one of the men. "We'll lower ye down and dump you on deck as softly as we would a barrel o' rum."

"Now, we're ready. Feet first, father. Gently, boys, take your time. We're saving a precious life!"

The poor priest was praying, I think, and Mr. Stapleton really felt sorry for him, but there was a deal of quiet merriment and joking on the deck below, and things were said that it might not have been good for Father McDowney to have heard.

"Lower away now lads—gently does it!"

But gently didn't, for the sack was but half-way down along the mast when the rope hitched in the block above, and there swang the priest for ten long minutes 'twixt heaven and earth like Mahomet's coffin.

Down at last, though, and so overjoyed was he, that hardly knowing what he was doing, he went hopping off, bag and all, nearly all the way to the quarter-deck like a boy doing the sack race.

The sight was so ridiculous that suppressed merriment burst its bounds, and from bowsprit to binnacle the decks rang with shouts of laughter. The mate released him, and then, Irish-like, the priest joined the laugh himself, and so merrily, too, that the men at once came to the conclusion that they had been "sold," as they termed it. They knew the worthy priest was fond of a practical joke, and this was one of the best they had ever seen.

Charlie Chat, his bulldog, knew better, however. The fierce looking dog, with the ugly face and kindly eyes, had been anxiously watching the whole performance, and now laughed and grinned like a lady-fox as he went barking and galloping round and round his master.

It remains to be seen whether Father McDowney was or was not the coward that some of the men from this date put him down as.

However, ten minutes after his wild adventure, his Reverence strolled on deck with a cigarette in

his mouth, as leisurely as if nothing had marred the even tenor of his life.

Behind him came faithful Charlie Chat, behind Charlie came Cheese, the monster brown tabby cat. Between these two existed a most perfect *entente cordiale*, and the gambols they indulged in, day after day, really did the men forward as much good as if they had been served with an extra glass of rum.

Charlie's face, like that of all well-bred bulldogs, was ugly in the extreme. But its very ugliness was a point of beauty, and this dog—built like a Dutch lugger—had the strength of a young lion. He was brave enough, moreover, to have tackled a tiger, but gentle was he as any suckling lamb, and when he laid his ears back and smiled at you with a grin that appeared to run down both sides, nearly as far as his tail, so droll was that chump of a head of his, that you would have laughed had your grand aunt been dying. But then you would have stooped down at once and patted him, for fear of hurting his feelings.

Charlie was happy on the present occasion. Had his dear master not been brought back to him apparently from the very jaws of death? So he commenced to tease the cat. Cheese was always ready for a game, and a droll one it was. After chasing pussy all round the ship a dozen times, she eluding the pursuit in the nimblest way, now springing on the bulwarks or the capstan or into the rigging just as Charlie thought he had her, Cheese allowed

himself to be grappled at last and a ring of men and officers surrounded the couple to witness the *denouement*. Anyone who did not know the game, would have felt certain that poor Cheese was being worried to death. The guttural "habbering" of the dog, as he throttled him; the fuss-fussing and contortions of the cat, were all terribly like reality. Finally pussy's cries got weaker and weaker and then she lay "dead." Now was Charlie's hour of triumph. He lifted her up—gently enough—by the back of the neck and carrying her aft, laid her down at Desmond's feet. Then he looked shyly up with that wondrous smile on his broad face.

"There's Cheese," he seemed to say. "She's met her doom at last and when you've examined her I think you will concur in my opinion that a coroner's inquest is the only thing that can comfort her."

But up sprang the dead pussy, gave Charlie a funny little pat on the jowl with a mittened paw and jumped on top of the skylight.

"Well, well," said Charlie Chat, gazing drolly after her; "who would have thought it. I must kill her over again some time this afternoon."

But ten minutes after this Charlie and Cheese were sound asleep on the grating abaft the binnacle with one of pussy's paws placed fondly over the bulldog's shoulder.

* * * * *

The voyage of the Bonito northward and east to-

ward Manila,¹ in the far-away Philippines, was a singularly delightful one, with just one accident though, and it served to cast a gloom over the vessel for many days.

Willie Bain was an ordinary seaman, a happy-faced young Irish lad who was a general favourite, not only forward among his messmates, but aft with the officers. Willie was always at hand when wanted, and was ever ready to do a favour or good hand's-turn for anyone who asked him; and his songs were considered the sweetest that were sung on Saturday nights by any sailor on board. I do believe that Charlie Chat would have defended him with his life's blood, and Willie might have been often seen doing his duty on deck, with Cheese seated lovingly on his shoulder, purring aloud as if to encourage him.

"Man overboard!"

O, that ringing and terrible cry!

In the forenoon it was too, the sea all around the ship blue and calm, and the Bonito steaming easily on her way.

All who heard that shout rushed on deck and the life-buoy was let go at once.

"Who is it? Who is it?" was the oft-repeated question.

It was Willie Bain. But surely on so fine a day, and he so good a swimmer too, he could be saved. Though the yacht had forged ahead and he was

¹ Pronounced Maneela.

left a good way astern, he was seen to clutch the buoy and rest thereon.

“Away life-boat’s crew!”

Ay, speed ye, men. Speed ye, for there is danger *in* the deep.

The men know this and had they been racing for a prize they could not make the boat speed more swiftly across the water than they do.

They are within fifty, thirty, twenty yards of him. The coxswain can see him smiling.

Then, suddenly—O the pitiable, agonising scream. It ends bubblingly and suddenly, and poor Willie Bain is seen no more.

But the boat’s crew find the water dyed with blood, and well they know what that means. Their messmate is dead—dragged down in the terrible jaws of a shark.

But sorrow cannot dwell long on shipboard and in a week’s time, though Willie would never be forgotten, there is nothing more said about the awful tragedy.

“Now boys,” said McDowney, when the Bonito dropped anchor outside Manila harbour, “I’ll answer as many questions as it may please you to put about the town, but if the pair of you ask two different questions at the very same time, I can’t promise to answer the both of you at once.”

“N—no!” said Desmond, in a half-puzzled kind of way. “You haven’t two tongues, Father McDowney, have you?”

"O, yes, I have, lad, I've as many tongues as they had when the Tower of Babel fell, but for the life o' me I can't use more'n one at a time."

"But look you, see; here on this bit of a chart you can trace Manila Bay. At the entrance to the left is the isle of Corrigedor, with its lighthouse. We'll pass that to-morrow, then the bay will open out and out till it is thirty miles across, and maybe more, one vast and beautiful sheet of water, and if you'll but rise in the mornings early—be quiet with you, Charlie Chat, don't be chewing the buttons off my best waistcoat—I was saying, boys, that if you rise in the mornings you'll see the sun pop up over the distant hills, and on the clouds and on the water such colours and colouring, all radiant with light, mind you, as you'll never forget in your lives. Well, we pass Cavite on the right—pronounce it Kaveetay, boys, and don't forget. It isn't much of a place, but it bristles with guns as you'll see, and the Spaniards—innocent souls—think it is invulnerable, unassailable and so forth. And then you come to Manila itself. And, through this, runs to the sea the big river Pasig."

"And is Manila a large place?" asked Desmond.

"As big as and maybe bigger than Dublin, itself. If every sinner in the place, my boy, has a soul, which I've sometimes doubted, then, there must be 300,000 souls of one kind and another in this queer, queer place."

"All Spaniards?" asked Ted McCoy.

"No, no, more'n one-half Chinese or native-Chinese, and that means people born in the city with Chinese fathers and mothers, and the other half are Spaniards, most of them the biggest scoundrels unhung. But there is another portion of the community ——"

"And that makes three halves, father," said Desmond, slyly.

"Ye're the droll boy, you are, sure enough, but the third half is Scotch and English and just a taste of the American element."

"There will soon be more Americans," said Captain Adeane. "That is my belief."

He little knew that he was talking prophetically.

"And now, lads, to bed with you," continued Adeane. "You needn't keep watch to-night, either of you, as I want you to turn out to-morrow, fresh and jolly."

Both boys were on deck next morning before sunrise. The men were scrubbing down decks, so the young fellows had stripped that they might have the hose turned on them. And this is one of the most bracing baths one can have on a starlit morning in the tropics. When you go to sea, readers, remember my words and make a trial of it.

* * * * *

Well, while Captain Adeane settled matters with the custom-house officers, and a tough lot they are, and called on friends with an eye to business and future developments, the two boys and his Rever-

ence, to say nothing of Charlie Chat, went on shore for a look about and a promenade in the palm-tree shaded suburbs.

They disdained the slow and unsteady tram-cars with their wretched horses, that seem to hang together, simply because they are covered with skin, though very often that is in holes in that it is invariably marked with the lash.

Our heroes did the shops first, ordering their parcels to be sent to await them at the best hotel. Then at this hotel they ordered dinner for a certain hour, and so, having seen all they cared to see for the present, they started off on the march.

* * * * *

Their long sea voyage had made the boys and their tutor strong-limbed, strong-lunged and hardy. But when they set forth that forenoon on a long walk northward and mostly by the river's brink—just to see things, as Father McDowney phrased it—they had no idea that they would have a wild adventure.

They were armed simply with Penang lawyers,¹ but concealed in his back pocket the priest carried a wicked-looking little revolver.

¹ A Penang lawyer is a kind of knob-kerry or shillalah made of very hard wood found on Penang Island. It is an excellent "lawyer" in case of a row with natives. Although it may be called a shillalah, it does not shilly-shally as ordinary lawyers do. It comes to the point at once and the case is ended right away.

They had for their guide a Chinese boy, who looked quite fifty years of age, but who in reality was only fifteen. They chose him because he looked bright-eyed and earnest, and right willing to earn a dollar. He could talk a little English, too, after a fashion. To his care was entrusted the grip-sack containing the party's modest luncheon, which included the priest's little taste of Irish whiskey.

The day was beautiful, but rather warm, so that fit though they were, it was fully three hours before they found themselves in the beautiful wilds. The road had been very narrow, little more indeed than a bridle-track except when passing through the little down villages, from the rickety shanties of which naked brown children ran forth to gaze in fear and wonder at the "foreign devils."

The palms and other magnificent trees were a sight to look at, so too were the birds and strange insects.

They came at last to a more hilly country, the mountains clad to their summits with primeval forests.

Then the guide suddenly stopped.

"Me no go muchee falder," he said. "Badee men in the follest. No, no!"

"Just a mile or two, my lad," urged the priest.

"Me likee you. Me likee go. But takee off dat hat, den I go."

"Take off my hat! Why?"

"He no plopah pidgin. I givee you mine."

The good Father McDowney laughed aloud.

He needn't have done so. The boy was right. A priest's hat was an eyesore to the natives at this time. It was the year 1895, and tired of the accursed cruelties of the Spaniards and their terrible extortions, the whole native population were hovering on the brink of rebellion. They hated the Spaniards with a fire of hatred that would soon be quenched in blood, but the priests were their especial foes.

However, it was many long hours before sunset, so McDowney and the boys pushed on and the Chinese lad followed reluctantly.

About a quarter of a mile further into this splendid forest, something attracted Charlie Chat's attention. It was a beast, the like of which he had never seen before—a porcupine, to wit, and growling gruffly, he disappeared in pursuit of it into the bush to make investigations.

Just two minutes after this, three wild-looking natives, armed with clubs, suddenly confronted them. These fierce men had come out of the forest.

They spoke in an unknown tongue, but there could be no mistaking their meaning. Our friends were "held up." Robbery was apparently certain, murder might follow.

"*Condemno nos*," roared Father McDowney.

That was good honest Latin, though he needn't

have put such terrible emphasis on the second syllable.

“What d’ye want, ye imps ye?” he added.

One robber replied by pitching a club at the speaker’s head, which, had he not ducked, would have brained him. The other two attacked the boys.

Then ensued about the freest kind of a fight that it has ever been my fate to witness.

CHAPTER III

More Adventures Afloat and on Shore

"Swings the scaly horror of his tail."—*Milton*.

"I would not spend another such a night,
Though 'twere to buy a world of happy days."—*Shakespeare*.

FATHER McDOWNEY'S English was generally as correct as any one need wish to hear, and his accent as sibilant and sweet as that of a Dublin lady, which is no small praise, but at this exciting moment he forgot all about the niceties of speech.

"Hurroo! my boys," he shouted, "Hurroosh! Hit 'em whare ye plaze, but hit 'em hard."

Both the "Hurroo!" and the "Hurroosh!" were beaten time to, as it were, by blows from the good priest's shillalah on the would-be robber's skull, the sound of which could have been heard a long way off.

That Filipino's head, however, seemed to be made of cast iron and he did not fall.

Father McDowney at once changed his tactics and changed his Penang lawyer at the same time from his right hand to his left.

Whack! Whack! The blows fell fair and square on the villain's shin-bones, and down he went, howling like a maniac.

He was *hors de combat*. But though defending themselves most gallantly, the boys had been beaten back yards along the road, and the priest now flew to their assistance.

It would have done any one's heart good to note the nimbleness with which his Reverence now twirled his shillalah. Nothing in the Donnebrook Fair of olden times could have equalled it. You scarce could have seen the morsel of timber, as he called it.

Desmond's right arm was partially disabled, but he laid about merrily with the left.

The battle was still undecided, and one man had drawn an ugly short stiletto.

How it might have ended, had not assistance arrived, it is impossible to say.

Charlie Chat, having followed the porcupine quite a long way, lost it in the ground.

He then pricked up his droll little ears, cocked his head and listened.

"A fight!" he said to himself. "Here goes! I'll take a ticket."

He covered the ground 'twixt himself and the combatants in a very short time, considering that he was but a cloddy muscular bulldog, and was just in time to collar the man with the poniard. He shook the instrument from his hand. He shook the man then as he might have shaken a rat, till the blood from his biceps flowed freely enough. When this fellow fell, shouting for mercy in bad Spanish,

the dog turned to seek another foe, but he had climbed up a tree.

"Now boys," cried Father McDowney, "by this and by that we've got the two of them. And when we tie them together we'll fetch the other down. Is your arm badly broken, my dear lad?"

"Not broken at all, sir," said Desmond, bravely. Yet his face was drawn and white with pain. "Only a trifling bruise!"

He even helped to tie the two fellows' hands, and when the other man was threatened with the priest's pistol, he came quietly down and submitted, like the others, to be tied with part of his own garments.

Then the march back took place, Charlie Chat walking behind with his master, who kept his revolver in hand, a boy at each side, and the guide, who had at last come up, walking on in front.

"A pretty procession!" the priest called it.

Although the villagers looked very threatening as they passed through, they arrived safely at last in Manila, and the robbers were handed over to the police. I never heard what their sentence was, but as it was proved that one of them at least was a promoter of the coming strife, doubtless it was severe.

The jolly priest was very merry at dinner that evening—and a better "spread," as Desmond termed it, surely no one ever sat down to.

No doubt remained in the lads' minds now that the priest was brave, and the adventure in the fore-

top and his ludicrous descent in the sack were all forgotten.

The moon was shining very brightly that evening as they dropped down stream in a Spanish boat and boarded once more the bold Bonito.

* * * * *

The yacht prolonged her stay in the Bay of Manila for six all too short weeks, but though Father McDowney and his boys went in for all kinds of sport and adventure, both near and far, Captain Adeane himself kept strictly to business. He had introductions to several of the chief exporters—English and Scotch—of the city, and with them he formed a new firm. He himself appointed a manager and even clerks without a Spaniard among them.

Meanwhile, in native boats, Father McDowney and our young heroes went cruising daily. They visited many of the smaller and adjacent islands, and sometimes slept thereon in hammocks under the palms. They fished in the sea and far up the river, as well, and made a small but beautiful collection of coral and shells to take home to the hacienda in Cuba. They visited, too, the most distant parts of the lovely island of Luzon, and found tropical scenery of such rare loveliness, that Desmond might well have been excused for calling the whole rural and forest districts of the place a Fairyland.

They never went unarmed now, however, but carried both guns and pistols, and though Charlie Chat

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was in himself an excellent escort, they added to it by taking with them two faithful natives. Therefore, whenever in a village or one of the old-fashioned romantic towns among the wooded hills and by the banks of some charming lake, the natives looked on them with suspicion, their men explained that they were not Spanish, but friends from a far-off country.

The mountains in some parts of the island they found to be exceedingly high and nearly always more or less volcanic. There are dangerous snakes here, and our heroes had several narrow escapes. Nor is the civet cat altogether a safe customer to come suddenly across.

One day while Father McDowney lounged lazily, smoking his brier by the banks of a small but lovely lake among the hills, the boys, accompanied only by Charlie Chat, went back into the forest to look at the many-coloured birds with which the woods abound. There was no real path, only a beast track. But they followed it, and were led thereby upward and upward, many hundreds of feet, till peeping backward through the trees, they could catch glimpses of the far-off blue sea and the white and fleecy clouds in the sky above. They were apprehending no danger, when suddenly right above them, from a cairn of small boulders came a blood-curdling yell, and next minute there stood out on a rock a huge civet cat. Long-headed, with glaring eyes, and bristling back arched on

high, there the huge monster stood and boldly defied them.

"Don't shoot, Ted," cried Dess, "perhaps the poor thing has young ones, and we are the invaders, mind." But Charlie Chat entertained quite a different opinion, and instantly attacked it. The habbering of the dog and fearful yelling of the wild beast resounded far and near through the forest, and seemed repeated by the echoes of the hills twenty times over. Charlie had fixed the civet and did not mean to quit that grip while life did last.

But seeing that the dog was getting badly clawed, young Desmond marched up, and with his revolver gave the wild-cat his *quietus*. The skin of that wild creature now hangs over a chair in the drawing-room of Adeane's Cuban hacienda, and Charlie Chat often takes a sniff at it, his face beaming with pride. No doubt that sniff brings back to his mind recollections of the terrible fight on the forest-clad hill in Luzon.

I fear these boy heroes of mine were sometimes a trifle rash, and that is what no boy should be who values his life.

This is precisely what Father McDowney told Desmond one day after an adventure he had with a monster crocodile.

The lake where Dess had gone in to bathe and have a swim, was small, and entirely surrounded by trees, whose leaf-laden branches bent downward

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till they kissed the dark water, leaving thus a lane twixt the bank and the bending tree-tips. This water-way was entirely arched over with foliage and looked so cool and inviting, that the lad could not help stripping for a dip. Luckily Ted himself did not follow his example, or most certainly one young life would have been lost.

"This is quite a lover's lane," cried Desmond, "and Teddy, if you'll walk alongside, I'll swim right round the lake."

"I'm with ye," said Ted, cheerily, "to the back of the world and after that."

So, steadily, with breast-stroke, Desmond began to plough the dark black water.

He had not gone far, however, till Charlie barked loud and excitedly, and went rushing ahead along the mossy bank.

Ted's eyes followed him, but next moment he was almost paralysed with fear. Just for a second or two he could not speak. He felt like one in a fearful dream. For far ahead in the green gloom he could see the waters stirred and a crocodile, with awful head and arms, making straight for the spot where Dess was swimming.

"Come out, O come out," he managed to gasp at last. "O Dess, Dess, the 'gator!"

He rushed close to the bank as he spoke, and his friend seized his extended hand.

Probably Desmond would never have a more narrow escape from a terrible death, for hardly was

he well up when the scaly monster swept past them and dived a little way farther on.

"It would have soon been all over, though," said the boy to the priest, "all over in a moment."

"I'm not so sure of that, either. 'Twould have been death from drowning, for these crocodiles don't kill one with their teeth and eat them right up at once. No, sure, they like their meat tender, and that ugly, great beast would have stowed you away under a bank for a few days until you were tender. So mind where you swim again, my boy. Don't you forget this adventure."

"O no, father," said Desmond, drolly, "I shan't forget it, because I shall write it down, you know. And dear old Charlie Chat! Why, it is the second time he has saved my life!

"You darling broth of a boy," he continued, hugging the dog, "it is the Albert medal you should have, and if you don't get it from the queen I'll make you one myself."

But before we leave the Philippines for good, my readers, I must tell you of one other wild adventure, in which Charlie Chat figured somewhat ridiculously, in a way at all events that did not redound much to the honour and glory of "Ye British Bulldog."

The boys and their kindly tutor had gone for a farewell picnic to their favourite island. The day was cooler than usual, with a light breeze that had sent their boat dancing right merrily over the

water, and they thoroughly enjoyed the basket of good things which they had brought with them, and the delicious fruit they found on the island, all washed down with the milk from green coconuts.

Father McDowney lay down as was his wont, to smoke, under the shade of a spreading tree, and to gaze at the sea. The boys had gone to look for a turtle to turn, and of course Charlie went too.

It was not very long before they came in sight of a huge fellow on the sand, but high up near to the woodland.

That turtle, however, had heard them coming. He said he had some important business in the water, and begged the boys to excuse him. Perhaps they might make it convenient to call again. So off he glided seaward.

Charlie was the first to head him off. The turtle snapped his horny jaws at him in quite an alarming way.

"That's dangerous," said Charlie to himself, "and I wouldn't like my nose snicked off."

So, foolishly enough, he turned tail and barked at the monster over his shoulder.

That was the turtle's opportunity, and he didn't let it slip, either. Next moment he had seized Charlie by his morsel of a crooked tail, and held on to it like a porous plaster.

The poor dog seemed in a terrible state of mind, for it was evident enough that this delightfully

edible reptile meant taking him out to sea and drowning him.

The boys rushed to his assistance and succeeded in turning the turtle. They turned Charlie too, though. When a turtle once seizes anything, nothing less powerful than a steam hammer can induce him to quit grips.

So the turtle had to be knifed, an ugly, cruel-looking operation. But he had bled quite to death before the terrible bill relaxed, and poor Charlie Chat was free to go and sit on the wet sand, to lick his wounded tail. The balance of the day the boys spent in fishing, in which they were very successful—taking home a large mess, which was enjoyed by all hands for dinner that evening.

The Bonito now started homeward, but this time she took the South American route, passed through the Straits of Magellan and northward ho! to the sweet, green island of Cuba, where they arrived in due time, after a pleasant but uneventful voyage.

CHAPTER IV

A Happy Meeting—Adeane Plays His First Card

“Know'st thou the isle when the lime-trees bloom,
When the gold orange glows in thicket's deep gloom,
Where a wind ever soft from the blue heaven blows,
And the groves are of laurel and myrtle and rose.”—*Goethe.*

THE villa or chalet, on the Isle of Pines,—which, as a peep at the map will show the reader—lies some distance to the southward of Cuba, and in about the same longitude as Havana, was the health resort of the Adeane family. It was also that of many other of the richer inhabitants of the large island, both Spaniards and Cubans.

Pinos, as it is often called, is as beautiful as a midsummer's dream, and those who visit it say that sickness can find no foothold on its shores. There you may be sheltered by its trees from the hottest sunshine, you may climb high up into its hills, the pinetrees, still around you, and be cooler, happier than below, but at night, sitting in the verandah of a villa, you are fanned by the bracing sea breezes, while moonlight or starlight shine soft o'er sea and land.

I don't think that anyone could spend a fort-

night on this green gem of the ocean without feeling the better for it.

When Captain Adeane left the West Indies, now more than a year ago, he had put a faithful old Spaniard lady in charge of his chalet, with one or two black servants to obey her behests and keep everything clean and in order. And now when he cast anchor in the little bay, he felt certain he would find her at her post, and probably sitting on her stool spinning silk, as of yore, and all alone with her cat.

You may guess how surprised he was therefore, when the negro servants, followed by his wife and daughter Aileen, came hastily down to the jetty to welcome his coming boat, in which were Desmond in the stern sheets and Teddy handling the ribbons, to say nothing of Charlie Chat and Cheese, both looking ridiculously pompous and full of importance.

I pass over the greetings that took place, merely mentioning that Mrs. Adeane, still a beautiful woman, bade her husband welcome with the tears standing in her eyes.

Nor were they altogether tears of joy. But now, hand in hand, brother and sister, husband and wife, made their way up the brae, through the tropical gardens, ablaze with beautiful flowers, crimson, white and blue, and into the drawing-room which opened by French windows on to the broad verandah.

The old housekeeper herself came in, bearing fruits and wine. She curtesied low at the risk of capsizing the tray.

"O señor," she cried, smiling, "it is ourselves that are happy to see you. It was dead and drowned we thought you all."

Desmond had thrown himself on the floor with Siss beside him, and his head was pillowed on his mother's lap, his mother's hand in his raven hair.

"Dearest husband," she said, after conquering her emotions somewhat, "I am so happy I scarce can speak. Surely you will not leave us now that the war has commenced."

"War, Leanore? War? And is that what has brought you here?"

"O dear, yes. We were afraid of our lives on the old plantation. We had visits from the insurgents, you know. They were none too civil at first, but they left us in charge of their lieutenant after I assured him that we had their interest at heart and not that of the cruel double-dealing Spaniards."

Danny, as his wife called him, patted her hand and said with a somewhat sad smile:

"You spoke the truth, dear, and I don't see what else you could have done, but—what followed?"

"O! a visit from the Spanish soldiers, who are building little forts and barbed wire trochas everywhere, up and down and across the island, and around every town or village of any size."

"And what said they?"

"Ah! Danny, I could not repeat their language, but for their officer, who, though rough-looking, was civil, I believe his men would have burned our hacienda and turned us adrift into the woods."

"Dared they?" cried Adeane, almost savagely, "they shall live to rue their kind intentions. But go on, never mind me. Passion will get hold of me when I think of the brutalities and bitter cruelties the poor Cubans have been subjected to for years—nay, ever since they were conquered by the thieving and murderous Español."

"I will go on. But I almost fear to tell you of their behaviour. The officer then accused us of harbouring the insurgents or rebels. He said we had forfeited our lives, if strict martial justice were to be meted out to us, but that he knew and respected you, Danny, and would pardon us."

"His name, Leanore?"

"Colonel Ronaldo."

"The meanest villain yet unhung. I'll pistol him when we meet."

"You'll do nothing rash, husband, for our sakes. Peace I think will soon be restored, for already the insurgents are starving, and they are but poorly armed."

"But the Spaniards, did they depart in peace?"

"No, Danny, and that is why we fled to this island. The colonel's men broke into our cellars before they left and helped themselves to our best

wine. Then they became raving madmen. I hid poor wee Aileen in an inner cellar. She was very brave. And I with Hodson, the overseer, stood our ground bravely and at length with much singing and shouting and waving of swords, firing their guns in the air as they went, they departed.

"But, gazing fearfully after them, I saw a dreadful thing. Five men in a row deliberately fired their guns low among the roots of one of our ripest sugar-cane fields. The officer rushed forward with his drawn sword and cleft the skull of the nearest. It was too late, the field was fired and all the beautiful woods nearby were soon hidden by white smoke and the sparks.

"And the servants, Leanore?"

"Alas! all have gone to join the insurgents with the exception of Hodson, a few women and old men. These went and hid themselves in the woods, when little black Dick ran in to tell us the soldiers were but a mile off and coming our way."

"This is sad news, dear wife. But, thank God, I have you and Aileen still. What matters it that the plantation has suffered a little. We shall go back there at once. I shall take the Bonito into Santiago."

"Are you not afraid?"

"Afraid? Nay love, I fear nothing. Had you any difficulty in leaving?"

"A little at first. We might have stolen away quietly, but that would have looked like guilty

fright. Conducted by little Dick we went boldly to Santiago and called on the governor himself. I fear I told a little fib, Danny, I said that we were afraid of the insurgents."

Danny Adeane laughed. "You'll be forgiven for that, I think. But listen, Leanore, when the Spaniards hear—as hear they will soon—that I have returned, and if I do not strike home for the plantation they will blame me or accuse me of being in league with the Cubans, and if they do we shall be far less safe here than at the hacienda."

"Nothing like putting a bold face on matters, dear. The Spaniards themselves are deceitful, I see no harm in paying them back in their own coin. I am still rich, Leanore, and if the Philippine scheme succeeds, the loss of my Cuban estates shall not keep me long awake at nights."

* * * * *

On the wings of a spanking breeze, Captain Adeane with his dear ones all on board took the Bonito into Santiago harbour, a few days after his visit to the Isle of Pines.

He was flying the American flag, but just as the customhouse boat shoved off and he had cast anchor, he lowered it slowly and hoisted the beautiful orange ensign of Spain.

He did this with reluctance, it is true, and was not certain in his own mind that it was right. But the priest and he had carefully considered the whole

matter and talked it out the evening before. And between them they had adopted a policy.

"For my children's sake and my wife's," said Captain Adeane, "I cannot afford to let my Cuban estates be captured. Assuredly the hacienda and plantation, all and whole, will be burned and we ourselves murdered if we do not keep on good terms with the dastardly Spaniards. We shall be *pacíficos*. But even *pacíficos* you know, father, will be robbed and murdered now, if they are even suspected of having dealings with the insurgents. But I think I can manage it so that these Cubans shall not come near us."

"Besides," said Father McDowney, "you are rich and I think that even the Spaniards can put a millionaire to a better use than hanging him."

Adeane smiled rather grimly.

"Thank heaven," he said, "my gold is not in Spanish banks either in Santiago or in Havana.

"But I am going to make myself safe. I am an American and war will be declared ere very long. That is my belief and it will be time enough then to leave the island."

"If you are permitted. Would not your very request for a passport lead the enemy to accuse you of being a spy, and at heart an insurgent?"

Adeane laughed aloud.

"They wouldn't be very far wrong, would they, father?"

The Spanish revenue officers who came off were

most urbane and polite, and Captain Adeane and his wife treated them most hospitably.

The Bonito remained at her anchorage for more than a week, receiving visitors and discharging cargo. Then the captain proceeded to play his first card.

Under pretence that he did not consider himself safe from the warlike intrusion of the insurgents, he begged the authorities to grant him a few soldiers to protect his plantation and his hacienda.

He received just the answer which he expected. The military commander regretted his inability to spare a single man.

"Could you not," he said, naïvely, "land and arm a portion of your own men?"

Adeane considered for a time, or pretended to, before he replied:

"I suppose I must," he said, "and having done so the craft can go with the rest to Havana. There she will be safe, happen what may."

He had not the slightest intention, however, of sending her to that town for a permanency. As for the injury done to the engines, although not such as could have been repaired at sea, it was not so great as had been imagined, and in a week's time the Bonito was once more fit and strong.

Now, wealth is very powerful in Britain, but in America, and in Cuba as well, it is all in all.

Long-headed Captain Adeane gave a large party at a hotel on shore, at which the governor himself

and the chief men of the city, but, above all, their wives were present. This entertainment cost him what might be considered a small fortune by a poor man.

That night not only the millionaire and his children, but both Dr. Ramsay and Father McDowney were in great form.

The party was the talk of the town for over a fortnight. There had been plenty of talk at the party, too. The wily millionaire was questioned by the governor himself—on the quiet of course—if there was really any probability of a war with America.

Adeane laughed, as he lit a fresh cigar.

He considered himself far too honourable a man, however, to tell a direct falsehood, though in my own humble opinion, deception is quite as bad as lying.

He answered the question by putting another.

"Is there the slightest chance," he said, "of the sky falling and smothering the birds?"

And Adeane, to say nothing of Father McDowney, made very great friendship, even to the extent of flirtation with the ladies that evening.

"I'll tell you something," he said, to one beautiful woman who was conversing with him concerning the rebellion. "I'll tell *you* something, in confidence, mind, because I know you will not repeat it. The insurgents visited my hacienda during my absence and almost scared my dear wife and child

to death. But I am now going to turn my place into a fortification."

"Indeed, Captain Adeane!"

The good lady was pleased and interested.

"Yes, and with twenty of my brave fellows from the Bonito, out yonder, and the darkies whom I shall take from Santiago, to work upon the plantation, in lieu of those who have deserted it and stopped the work, I think I can make it hot for any enemy that shall dare to approach it."

The millionaire knew exactly what would happen and the exact worth of the confidence that was to be reposed in this charming Spanish lady. In two days' time the rumour was general, and it was openly stated in clubrooms that Adeane was going to stick to his old plantation, that his hatred of the Cubans was deep and strong, that war with America was out of the question, and that the insurgents who were, after all, but an undisciplined mob, would soon lay down their arms. That, moreover, if certain concessions were made to them, and the ringleaders shot, beautiful Cuba, Spain's richest possession, would soon be a happy and contented land.

When they heard all this, Adeane and the priest had a right jolly laugh.

Not on shore, though, for in these troublous times, in Santiago, every wall had ears, and a word, or even a look, would cause a man to be suspected, imprisoned, and in all probability, after a mock trial—shot.

Well, the millionaire struck the iron while it was hot, and found not the slightest difficulty in obtaining a pass to protect him while crossing the wild country with his men and his negroes, carrying stores from the ship, of provisions, wine, arms and ammunition.

The Bonito was now put in complete charge of the first mate.

He was ordered to go to Havana under British colours, there to lay in a cargo. Thence he was to cross the Atlantic to Dublin. (Adeane was so thorough an Irishman that he cared not to let his vessel visit London.) In Dublin he was to lay in stores that would be useful in Pinos or on the plantation.

Mr. Stapleton was given many other orders in writing and the last one was that on his return he should call nowhere, but make straight for the little sheltered bay above whose waters the chalet stood, and there lie until he received further commands from Adeane.

So, away seaward, adown the beautiful bay steamed the good Bonito. Our young heroes and Dr. Ramsay stood where they were, on shore, until they had seen the last of her—let us hope not the *very* last—then, with a sigh, they turned away and went back to the hotel.

CHAPTER V

*"A Free Cuba!—Down with the Dons!"
That was the cry*

"By oppressions, woes and pains,
By our sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But we shall be free!"—*Burns.*

ABOUT this time—the latter end of '96, if my memory serves me well—the whole island of Cuba was in a state of great turmoil and uneasiness. The insurgents were "out" as the Scottish Highlanders were in '45, but not in the same way. Their principal objects seemed to be to carry on a kind of guerilla warfare and to harass their enemies, the Spaniards, in every way possible.

Bands from either side might be met anywhere, so it was an undertaking of no small danger for Adeane to make his way eastward and north, with all his impedimenta, five and thirty miles or thereabouts.

The roads were impassable, at present, for anything resembling a carriage.

So Mrs. Adeane, Aileen and the maid, a bonnie blue-eyed young lassie from Limerick were borne along by the negroes in hammocks.

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The ladies had green palm leaves to cover their faces from the burning sun by day, and both Desmond and Teddy McCoy kept for the most part trudging along by their side.

So too did Father McDowney, and he often started a song which did much to cheer their hearts. So that the first day passed in a very happy and jolly way indeed.

McDowney was used to camp life, and a full hour before the sun sank down behind the western hills in a glory of sky, such as we seldom witness in these sombre British Isles of ours, he had found a splendid pitch.

Assisted by the men, fires were soon built, plenty of dry wood collected and the cooking of dinner commenced. In case it might come suddenly on to rain during the night, gipsy tents of boughs and broad palm leaves were erected for the ladies, inside which were hung their hammocks.

Singular as it may seem, Cheese, the cat, had trotted alongside the party all day long, and now sat down contentedly by the fire to watch the cooking and warm his nose, for Cheese could do with a good deal of heat. Charlie Chat lay down close beside him, with his great chunk of a head on his two fore-paws and was soon fast asleep and snoring.

The dinner—Irish stew—was voted a complete success. Sentries—armed to the teeth, were next spread all around the camp to give notice of the approach of strangers, if any such there should be.

But Adeane feared nothing. If visitors came and they proved to be Spaniards, he had his passports. If they were insurgents he believed that he could easily deal with these also.

"I consider this just too awfully romantic for anything," said Desmond, with a happy smile.

"And so do I, sure," said Ted. "Just listen to the silence, Dessie!"

Everyone did "listen to the silence," for a minute or two.

It was deep and impressive. Just the very lightest of breezes sighing or whispering through some royal palm-trees, whose strangely beautiful leaves were silhouetted far up against the starry sky. The mournful cry of an owl. One startling shriek from the neighbouring wood and that was all. The scream made Aileen tremble; so long, so agonising was it, dying away in sad cadence at last. But when assured that it proceeded from a night-bird she regained confidence. Bar these sounds, nothing was to be heard in all this land of solitude.

"Look! Look!" cried Ted, after a time. "Sure as I live there is a house on fire, just through the woods yonder!"

Adeane laughed.

"No, Ted my man," he said, "that is the moon."

Higher and higher she rose, getting more beautifully bright every minute, till the world around our heroes seemed almost as light as day.

The camp had been pitched on high ground, and

now looking eastward the sleeping woodlands, the heights and hollows were seen to be bathed in a strange phosphorescent light till they were hemmed in by a range of distant mountains.

Here and there on the lowest lands, however, lay what appeared to be lakes. It was but the white mist rising from the ground and shimmering like water in the moon's pale rays. It was indeed a lovely, almost a solemn scene.

But it must not lead to melancholy. The good Father McDowney was determined it should not. And as soon as conversation began to flag, he got out his fiddle, and so with talking and with song the evening passed quietly, happily away until nearly ten when the ladies retired.

The sentries were now doubled round the camp, the fire was kept up and the officers and men lay down to sleep on the cool ground, with their arms beside them.

They were very tired and the drowsy god Morpheus required no second invitation to seal their eyes in slumber.

But the night was not to pass without an adventure.

It might have been well on in the middle watch, fully three in the morning, when all hands were suddenly awakened by the crack of a rifle.

Then the voice of a sentry called, “Stand. Come no farther without accounting for your presence!”

Every man Jack was now kneeling down ready to

fire if an order was given, or if the camp was rushed upon by either Dons or rebels.

But boldly forth strode Adeane himself to the front. He could see not thirty yards away a group of probably thirty men, mostly in white, with sombrero hats, and armed with guns and fixed bayonets.

"I am officer here; we are pacificos. Who are you?"

A tall, soldierly-looking man, sword in hand, now advanced a little way waving back his comrades who seemed burning to attack.

"And I am officer *here*," he said. "We are insurgents."

"Advance, friend, I am glad to see you," said Adeane, and the colonel came on half-way. When the two met, hands were shaken, then after a brief conference the insurgent turned to his men.

"Stack arms," he cried, and was instantly obeyed. What Adeane had told the colonel it is not in my power to say, but at all events it speedily brought about a peaceful solution to what might have proved a fatal and terrible encounter.

"I have now told you, captain," said Adeane, "how we are situated. One moment, while I inform the ladies of our party that we are safe, then I shall join you by the fire."

He did as he had proposed and was glad to hear his wife's voice assuring him that they were not in the least afraid.

The boys served out an allowance of both wine and bread to the newcomers, the rank and file of these settled round the fires built by the negroes, and the insurgent leader squatted down to hobnob and converse with Adeane, the doctor and the priest.

“No need to talk anything but English, gentlemen,” said the “capitan.” “I have been in your country and know your language well.”

“I am glad of it,” said Adeane, “for though my good friend, Father McDowney, is conversant with many languages, I must confess my knowledge of Spanish is nothing to boast of. But success to you.”

He whispered some words in the Cuban’s ear.

“A thousand thanks, señor. May God in His abundant mercy give us help, for man seems unlikely to come to the aid of this down-trodden though lovely land. A land that surely is worth fighting for.”

“Your hopes must burn higher, capitan. Tell your chiefs from me when you go eastward, that America is but waiting an opportunity to quarrel with your oppressors. Our fleet is already getting fitted out for any eventuality. Till we are ready it would be vain to fight. Are Spain’s ships not double in number to ours? Were they well-manned and better admired, our chance would be small and short our shrift.”

“But, soldier,” continued Adeane, “we have yet

an hour or two till sunrise and your men had better move while it is still dark. Your doing so will keep me from trouble and therefore enable me to assist your cause later on. I should like to know then your own opinion of the causes that led to the insurrection. Briefly."

"Yes, I shall be very brief, though heaven itself only knows all our poor people have suffered."

Aldiros, for that was his name, paused for a moment to glance at the fire and his face could now be seen well. A high crowned head with closely clipped black hair, a dark curled moustache, cheekbones high and eyes large and wild-looking, yet very sad withal. He turned abruptly next moment and faced his audience.

"Gentlemen, I shall not enlarge on my own sorrows. I but place myself before you as an example. I am only one in a thousand who have suffered.

"A brief year ago I was a pacifico, living on my little estate in a pretty chalet with my dear wife and four charming girl children, the eldest only nine.

"I was suspected of harbouring insurgents, and marked down for destruction. At midnight our villa was attacked. Midnight on a moonlit night just like this. O, the horror of it! My wife and children were dragged from bed—I had not yet retired, but so quickly was the door burst in that I had no time even to draw my revolver.

"I should sicken you, did I tell you what hap-

pened, but in one brief quarter of an hour my darlings were all weltering in their blood near our door. I saw this with my own eyes. I was tottering with fear, and held by three Spaniards. A worse fate was doubtless to be reserved for me.

"But suddenly, my friend, I went mad, so it seems to me now. I dashed the Spanish devils from me as easily as if they had been rats; my revolver had not been taken away, and in a few seconds all three fell dead from where they had stood gaping in astonishment. I seized a sword, but before I left to run amuck, I remember jumping on their faces with my heels. Remember too that rifles rang out in the still air, but the bullets flew harmlessly past me. An attempt was made to surround me, but, sword in hand, I cut my way through their rascally ranks and escaped into the woods.

"How I lived for a night and day I cannot tell you, but next evening in the cold moonlight I left the jungle and made my way back to my ruined hacienda.

"All was quiet enough here, now.

"I procured a spade and digging a grave, laid my dead darlings side by side and filled it in.

"The shower of tears that now fell from my eyes doubtless saved my reason.

"But there, above the mortal remains of my murdered family, I raised my arms and eyes to heaven, and vowed vengeance on the man who had done them to death.

"Señor, I am going to keep that vow.

"Señor, I am even now on his tracks. But, there! I must now pull myself together, for you and your reverend friend must deem me egotistical."

"Alas! my friend, I know now something of the sufferings of the unhappy struggling Cubans. I need trouble you to say but little more. Surely the just judgment of heaven will fall upon your oppressors."

"Amen!" said the Cuban.

"But only a few words more," he added, "and I have done. You have been long at sea and do not yet know enough, probably concerning the outbreak of what I might call real hostilities."

CAUSES OF THE WAR

"After years of terrible persecution with brief intervals, during which, on the accession perhaps of a new government in Spain, there was a kind of lull; we were promised all sorts of reforms which were never carried out, and this caused us to lose all faith in our conquerors. There were men, traitors, among ourselves however, who pretended to believe the Spanish, and time after time we were held back, or when we did manage to take the field these men trammelled us. The fights were short and bloody. Our people were throttled or hanged before their children at their own cottage doors, the houses fired and finally all the family butchered.

"We could see then, that they, the enemy, meant to exterminate us root and branch, that Cuba might be a colony entirely and completely Spanish, to which the people might migrate.

"Two years ago they promised, what I may call, sweeping reforms. The bill of fare presented to our revolutionary leaders was so inviting, that many counselled that arms should be given up. Luckily, these men were in the minority. The others could see that if once disarmed, slavery, instead of freedom would be our doom.

"After this came unfortunately complete depression in trade, and as you know, sir, for you must have suffered too, the stoppage of the great sugar industry. There was nothing for the mill hands to do now. They could not make up their minds to starve, and being paid off from the factories, they rushed in large bodies to join the standard of revolt.

"We were, however, encouraged to go on the war-path by the efforts of our fellow-countrymen in the United States. This perhaps you already are aware of."

"I do know it," said Captain Adeane. "There were, while I still lived in Ireland upward of 50,000 Cubans in America. Funds were raised to help you here to buy arms and ammunition, and some of the workmen would have given half their earnings for this object, had they been asked. 'A free Cuba!' That was their war cry, and 'Down with

the dastardly Spaniard!’ I myself, capitan, had the honour of contributing a mite toward your freedom.”

“God in heaven bless you, sir.”

The Cuban grasped Adeane’s hand, and the tears were rolling down his cheeks.

He dashed his hand across his face as if ashamed of his weakness, and when he started to his feet and drew his sword, pointing it skyward, he looked all a patriot, all a hero.

“By heaven!” he cried, “we shall be free!”

His own men answered him with an exulting shout, and those of the Bonito joined heartily in.

Had a body of Spaniards appeared at that moment, even double in number to those brave fellows, not one would have been left alive to carry news to their camp. They might have had time to fire just one volley, then it would have been hand to hand and knife to knife, to the awful end.

“The day has come,” he said, more quietly, as he reseated himself by the fire. “And the men have come. It is death or victory. *That*, we have sworn, and so tired and weary are some of us from the persecutions we have endured and the sorrows we have suffered, that we care not which it is.”

“Nay, nay, nay,” cried Adeane, laying a kindly hand on the capitan’s shoulder, “do not be discouraged. You are fighting fearful odds, but as sure as yonder moon shines above us, happy days are in store for your poor bleeding land!”

"Again, I thank you. We have put our hands to the plough; we must not look back. We began by riots—they were but little more in Mantanzas. Small riots. The fires of rebellion were thought to be extinguished, and virtually they were until we found brave leaders who knew something of organisation. We tried here, there and everywhere to carry destruction into the province of Santiago, the district where we are at present. To burn, to loot and to slay. Soon we were thousands strong, and this forest and mountain land suits us well. But the old revolutionary leader Maceo landed at last on the east from Costa Rico, and had with him a small, but determined band of exiles. Bold, good Maceo, a thorough Cuban, a mulatto, if you please, but a man.

"Ah! my young boys, you may well listen and look," he continued, addressing Ted and Desmond. "The arrival of Maceo and his daring progress inland is a bit of real romance. Maceo knew no fear. Strong, hardy and daring, he and his brave fellows pushed their way onward and westward from Baracoa—near to which they had landed without tents or covering—through woods and wilds, living on the fruit that grew around them, drinking only the water of the rills, often tired and very weary, yet oftentimes attacking and putting to rout double their number of the cowardly foe, though sometimes having to fly into dark glens, or into the forests or the mountains, because the

enemy was strong enough to have exterminated them.

"I was with a regiment of Cubans when Maceo arrived, after a whole fortnight of terrible suffering, during which his thirty followers had dwindled down to five. The others had been killed in battle, had been wounded and fallen into the enemy's hands, or otherwise died by accident.

"But the old leader Maceo had a glorious reception. He was our man, and we meant to die for him if necessary, but it should be sword in hand.

"Now under our Maceo we fought like fiends, and after many a hand-to-hand battle with the base Spaniards, I fear we took ugly revenge. Shoot our prisoners? No. Were we not wild beasts? Made so by cruelties it would be unlawful to name? Did we not remember how our wives and daughters suffered? Did not the screams of our infants still resound in our ears as they were bayoneted before our eyes and pitched into the midst of our burning homes. Shoot them? No. We garrotted or knifed them, and if revenge is a sin, may heaven in its mercy forgive us.

"Then came more good luck for us, for a greater leader than even Antonio Maceo landed in the south, in the very centre of the enemy's outposts—and this was brave José Martí, and with him was Gomez, and only a mere handful of followers. Not, I believe, a dozen in all.

"Their journey toward the patriot's camp was

another piece of romance, so many narrow escapes had they. Gomez himself told me that more than once while hiding in caves in the glens, pickets passed them so closely that he might have stretched a hand out and clutched one by the leg. To their disgrace and dishonour, be it told, these patrols were frequently drunk.

"One evening José and Gomez had a very narrow escape. The two were by themselves in a cave, their only companions being snakes and other loathsome reptiles, when a band of Spaniards stopped at the bushes in front.

"'Twas here they disappeared!' cried one. 'Let us search the cave.'

"Gomez and his companion silently drew their swords, and raised them ready. Their time had come, they thought, but they would sell their lives dearly. The price should be Spanish blood. But at that moment two birds from over the head dashed out right into the very faces of the foe.

"'Come on,' cried another of the picket, 'there is no time to waste. Birds don't roost where men hide. They are farther ahead. Come.'

"You see, Captain Adeane, God sent His wild birds to save our gallant leaders.

"But now, my friend, the day will soon break, so, for your safety, as well as our own, we must to horse and ride away."

"I do not wish you, capitán, to get into danger, but it still wants half an hour of sunrise. The

Spanish dull-heads are still wrapt in slumber. Have one more cup of wine and speak with me a little longer."

"I shall, even should we have to fight our way back to camp.

CHAPTER VI

"Our Fleet Horses Will Speedily Bear Us Far Away"

"Wha wad be a traitor knave?
Wha wad fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee."—*Burns.*

"You may easily guess," continued this brave insurgent officer as he coolly rolled a cigarette, "that both José and Gomez received a hearty welcome when at last they reached our camp. The word went out like wild-fire, and our army got bigger and bigger every day, till it reached ten thousand gallant men, every one of them, without brag or boast, willing to lay down his life for poor, bleeding Cuba.

"Splendid horses we had too, yes, and have. Your Don can ride no better than a ticket-clerk, but the Cuban and his steed are both as one.

"And the Dons soon learned that they had their hands full now, and sent, with all the haste possible, for reinforcements, which finally arrived, some thirty thousand strong. A new governor was also appointed, but alas! before this a great misfortune befell the patriots. For José Marti was shot dead

in an unexpected fight, and Gomez himself was wounded.

"But, compared to the Spaniards, we were but poorly armed, and the want of ammunition kept us from dealing them many a deadly blow.

"Nevertheless we knew every inch of the country far better than they did. Their silly forts and trochas do not alarm us. We cut the latter and fire the former whenever we come across them.

"We come down on the Spaniards like a whirlwind, when they least expect us, a volley or two is fired, then it is slash and cut and thrust. If we disperse them, well and good. If they are too strong, we disappear as quickly as we came, carrying with us our dead and wounded, and quite as often as not a few of their rifles, and packets of cartridges.

"Gomez was soon well enough to mount his horse once more, and lead us in the fight. His wound was not healed, however, and it would sometimes break out afresh. With my own eyes, señor, I have seen the blood dropping from his saddle as he rode into action.

"Gomez was worth a thousand men in a fight, and victory invariably honoured that part of the field on which he rode.

"The main object of Gomez was to capture Camaguey, the scene of a former conflict.

"The people here, however, dreaded the Dons. They were soft if not cowards. He invaded it

nevertheless, and though sick in soul and body, and suffering great pain, he almost lived in the saddle.

"Even the Camagueans took heart when they saw how determined Gomez was.

"And the invasion of this district, which the Dons themselves deemed so important, was completely successful. I hardly think that the Spaniards triumphed in a single fight. Gomez swept everything before him, filling his coffers too, his distant stores of food, and his ammunition waggons.

"Campos was the Spanish leader, and he certainly did his best to foil Gomez, in every way he could. Gomez raised a war-fund, and the crops and mills of all farmers who did not contribute to this were to be destroyed, and sugar-mills burnt."

"Mine is safe, I think!" said Adeane, smiling.

"True, señor, and your excellent overseer well knows the reason why.

"Gomez now ordered all railway lines and wires to be destroyed. Forts were to be attacked and looted of arms and ammunition, a general guerilla warfare carried on in fact, and the Dons were to be slain on sight. But discretion is the best part of valour, and Gomez knew it. He would not sacrifice his men needlessly, by attacking forts or divisions of the enemy where success was highly improbable

"Time is too short to tell you all the adventures of Gomez, and how manfully and skilfully he fought, for the Lord Himself seemed on his side,

while the war was carried westward to Santa Clara, and to Mantanzas itself.

"From a mere guerilla war, or war of harassment, it became a war in the open fields, señor. Though the leader, Don Campos, had latterly about one hundred thousand men in the field, he could make no headway at all against the insurrection, while on the other hand, the rebels as they were insolently called, were elated by their victories, for, small though these might be, compared to the great and terrible battles of European nations, they were important, and not a man was there in the forces of Gomez who did not expect the day to come when Cuba would be free, and from end to end clear of its dastardly enemies.

"There is a fiend," continued the insurgent captain, "called General Weyler, who came upon the scene in February, '96. Hated and despised by Cubans of every caste, for the terrible atrocities he had committed in Camaguey during a former war.

"One look at this fellow's sinister barbarous face, around which a real smile never yet curled, would tell you that he was cast in the mould of a murderer and villain.

"Weyler informed the people of Havana that he would soon make short work of the rebels, and clean the land of them.

"This was but an empty boast, for Gomez and bold Maceo joined forces; the former had come

from the east, the latter from the west, and both had carried out the same tactics of laying waste the countries through which they passed, that the Dons might be deprived of their revenue. The workmen from the stricken fields had joined, and so increased their armies.

"Weyler was a splendid hand at massacre and torture, especially when he encountered women and helpless children, but, when he or his men faced Gomez, Maceo or the bandit Bermudez, his courage oozed out at the toes of his boots, and his generalship proved mere braggadocio.

"Gomez fought splendidly and carefully. Returning to Camaguey, for example, he encountered General Castellanos. This officer had a little army of considerably over two thousand so-called 'men.' Gomez had six hundred heroes, many well mounted.

"The affair was a glorious one for the arms of our general, and Castellanos with his apologies for soldiers, fled in cowardly confusion from the field, leaving behind him two hundred and fifty killed and wounded, while Gomez's losses were insignificant.

"The insurgents, to tell you the truth, would have slain every wounded man, had not kind-hearted Gomez soon put an end to so shocking a butchery.

"But misfortunes befell poor Maceo, for Weyler, at the head of thirty thousand men, marched toward the west, and the country devastated by our brave general. Half starved, many of our men de-

sented. But Gomez managed, by a supreme effort, to cross a river and enter a Havana province, where he ordered a concentration of troops. But, alas! that I should have to tell it, before the arrival of the forces he was led into an ambush, and fell before a volley from the bush-hidden Dons.

"Thus died our great general. He was one of a family of eight or nine brave fellows, every one of whom had lost their lives in this grand struggle for freedom.

"This devil, Weyler,—I trust, señor, the ladies cannot hear me—succeeded in laying utterly waste the province of Pinar del Rio, and one or two others. This he called pacifying them.

"And now, the world-hated and despised Weyler proceeded to pacify the province of Mantanzas, lying, as you know, to the immediate east of Havana, in the same way. He was a liar as well as an assassin, and his bulletins sent in, and sent home to Spain, represented battles bravely fought and won, in which he said he lost but ten or twenty men, but slew 'the rebels' in hundreds. Now what were the rebels he slew? Why innocent pacificos, old men, women and children, dragged from their beds at the midnight hour, and butchered beside their burning homes. O God! it was a fearful time. Ay, and *is!*

"Even the women and children—who were made prisoners, all for sham and show—were taken into the Spanish towns, only to undergo contumely, ill-

usage and starvation from which, with its accompanying fever, they died a horrible death in streets, in gutters and in ditches.

"But the United States, hearing of all this and acquiring the true version of the story of Weyler's diabolical deeds, made strong and even threatening representations to the home government of Spain, and Weyler has been ordered home, Blanco, a former general of the Philippine Islands, reigning in his stead.

"One of Weyler's plans was to lay waste the country all around the principal towns, to disarm or murder the men, or cause honest pacificos to join the insurgents and drive the rest into fortified places around these cities, with their women and children, if they could not find a worse use for them.

"This plan, it is needless to say, was simply a cruel and more horrible method of utter extermination than death by sword or pistol would have been.

"Blanco promised a more humane policy, and the prisoners would be allowed to cultivate the fields that they and the women and children might live; but ah! could you but see these inclosures as I have done while a spy; see the sickness, the starvation, the utter misery of the people therein, it would cause your heart to bleed. And why should such terrible punishments be meted out to men and their families, whose greatest fault is their wish to be free?"

"Why, indeed," said Adeane, in a voice modulated by pity and by sorrow. "This is indeed a terrible world. But cheer up, my friend, I trust we shall meet again when brighter days shine on poor distracted Cuba."

"Thank and bless you, Señor Adeane, and now good-bye. Our fleet horses will speedily bear us far, far away from here."

"Adios!"

CHAPTER VII

The Old Plantation Home—Strange Adventures

"Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee.

"Such is the patriot's boast, where'er we roam,
His first best country, ever is at home."—*Goldsmith*.

THE insurgent captain and his merry men glided away as they had come, like ghosts in the moonlight. Their horses were shod and trained with a view to making as little noise as possible. They were speedily beyond a far-off wood, and were seen no more.

"It's all so sad!" said Father McDowney.

"Sad indeed," returned Adeane, "but did not Ireland, our own dear land, come through the self-same troubles?"

"True, true!"

"But come, Desmond, and you Ted, awake the men. See yonder is the red sun peeping over the eastern woods. We must breakfast as soon as possible and be off. I long to see the old hacienda, if indeed it is not already demolished. Heigho!"

"No sighing!" exclaimed Father McDowney. "I

won't have it, Captain Adeane, at any price at all. See yon star still scintillating in the far west, that the rising sun has not yet extinguished. It is like the eye of God, and it is smiling kindly on this distressed country. As for the dead, my friend, their troubles are over. But, really, you know, the Christian never dies."

"Thank you, father, I'll keep up a good heart, never fear."

In less than an hour the camp was struck, though the tents were left standing; and perhaps that is rather an Irish way of putting it.

The journey was commenced, and they meant, if all went well, to reach home by afternoon.

How beautiful was the day, how all-too-bright the sunshine. The sky was as blue now as the woods were green and lovely. It would take a clever pen indeed, to give in a book like this, even an epitome of their surprising beauty.

They were woods not only of splendid palm-trees, but of flowering shrubs in glorious undergrowth, and ferns of every shape and size. And fruit, there was here also in great abundance, and many kinds may be gathered all the year round.

Then the birds, though their song-lilts may not be so loud and melodious as those of our own in brave Britain, are here arrayed in colours that rival the rainbow. The lizards themselves are a show, and though some in shape and appearance—such as the iguana and a few species of the chameleon with

their stalky eyes—may be called horrid to behold, creatures such as one may see in dreams while ill of fever, still nature has been careful to paint the rest in colours, which, when at rest, cause them to look like gorgeous flowers. Sea-green, orange and vermillion, I think, predominate most.

Well if our heroes did have any danger to encounter to-day apart from that of meeting a band of raiding Spaniards, who might rob and even murder them, it was when fording some streams that were well known to be haunted by the dreaded and dreadful cayman or alligator.

So timid were the ladies when they arrived at a ford that Adeane caused the negroes to form in two rows, one above and one below the crossing place, and flop the water with branches while the white people passed.

But many caymans ventured quite close up to the poor blacks, snapped fearful jaws and seemed almost inclined to attack.

The exit of the negroes at last was a sight to see. They kept up the flopping and shouting as they backed toward the opposite bank, but when near it, a general panic took place. Then shrieking with terror they scrambled helter-skelter up and out.

"Tank de heabenlay fadder," said one nigger, after the lot had got safely over the last ford, "de 'gators no catchee me!"

"Humph!" said another, tossing his black head,

"what foh de 'gator no catchee you? You on'y common trash. De 'gators lub good food. Bah!"

* * * * *

Hillo! here is the beautiful hacienda in sight, while the sun is still high in the heavens.

Everyone—as the party emerges from a wood—looks happy now.

"Not a bit altered," says Adeane, "only the burnt sugar-cane fields."

Hodson himself—the overseer—comes joyfully out to meet them. He is on horseback, and so are half a dozen sturdy Cubans who have stuck to him through all the evil days. Hodson while still two hundred yards away must lift his hat and cheer, and the echo he receives from Adeane and his men resounds from hill to hill.

On their entrance through the great gates that more immediately surrounded the hacienda, or beautiful Cuban villa, Adeane was astonished to find the gardens and flower-beds, and all the splendid shrubberies looking so clean and neat. Even the broad walks, bordered by gorgeous palms and flowering habiscus were a sight to see. Never a weed anywhere.

Smiling and happy now the worthy captain turned to Hodson for an explanation.

Smiles breed smiles, and Hodson laughed as he replied:

"You see it was like this, sir, when my Cuban fellows left—all but those you see and the women

negresses and old men—in droves we found we could not carry on the mill. Indeed the Spaniards who have paid us several visits threatened that if we did so, in the absence of the family, they would burn us down.

“So as I could not kick against the pricks, as the good priest here might say, I determined to set the men to work in the gardens and all around, and I am truly glad, sir, you think we have made a good job of it.”

“I am delighted and so—I can see—are my wife and daughter.”

“The mill, too, sir, is well in order. No rust there, and if you choose we can set to work to-morrow.”

“Thank you, Hodson. We’ll see; and I have that in my grip-sack which I think will protect me from the insolence or attacks of even the Spaniards themselves.”

This hacienda was just such a house as could not be built and kept up in beautiful form in England or Scotland itself.

It looked with its white walls and its portico draped in trailing flowers like a fairy domain. Inside it was furnished in character. The rooms were all lofty with depending punkahs, and the tasteful paintings on the walls, with their well-chosen light framed pictures, made everyone feel cool.

Mrs. Adeane found, to her delight, that all the bedrooms were quite ready for occupation, so she

called the female servants, black and bronze, and thanked them right heartily for their thoughtfulness.

"Ah!" said one pretty Cuban girl, who like the rest was dressed with great care but simplicity. "It is not we you must thank. It is the big man Hodson."

She laughed as she continued, "He come in to the housekeeper's room; same time we all sit and talk. 'Off with you girls,' he cry, 'your old missus and the dear young one and Desmond too, they all come home. Clean, dust, sweep, wash and bee-you-tee-fy everything. I'll give you three days and if by that time the whole house isn't as bright as a new dollar, I'll start the mill and feed you all through it, and you'll all come out as flat as pancakes.'"

Aileen and her mother both laughed, for Fatima was a great favourite with everyone, especially be it just hinted with Dick Hodson himself, and there had been a rumour once that went all over the plantation that at no very distant date, they would get married.

Indeed it had gone so far, that Captain Adeane himself had promised his faithful overseer a rise in salary and a cottage to himself on the day he should lead Fatima to the altar. But the terrible war had put everything out of everybody's head—well, apparently.

* * * * *

Though only fourteen, Aileen was a very beautiful girl indeed. She had the blue Irish eyes of mother and father, albeit her hair would have given one the idea she had Spanish blood in her veins. She considered herself far too old, however, to ride on Teddy McCoy's back as she used to.

I should not say Teddy perhaps, but Ted, bold big Ted, who was nearly a man in years, and in wisdom and bravery or pluck considered himself to be no chicken indeed.

Nevertheless now that they were once more settled in the dear old hacienda, they all found time to take many a ramble, both in forest and in fields. But they had strict orders that though they might fish and study botany—which they did on the days the priest went with them—they must never venture far from the hacienda. The country was in so terribly an unsettled and lawless condition, that to do so, would have been very far from safe indeed.

The hacienda with its broad fields and its negro village not a great way off was on high ground, and on a bright day the view that was caught from its upper windows was very entrancing. The country far to the south was a rolling one, hill and dell, and sheets of water with many a stream meandering through it like silvery threads among the green. Farther north were the mountains and these were clad in primeval forest and often formed the hiding-places of the insurgents, and of poor wretches who were driven from their

homes by the persistent brutality of the hateful and hated Spaniards.

The plantation indeed had been originally a clearance in the forest, and the land was fresh soil for the sugar-cane and for the beautiful tobacco plant as well. But about two miles from the hacienda, and down in a deep dark dingle, or defile, sparsely covered with wood, was a small lake which gave a tributary to a river not a great distance off.

Many lovely water-fowl used to alight here, but Dick Straw, a pet negro servant, told the boys one evening that lately a huge cayman or alligator had taken up his abode and pulled down the ducks daily.

"Suppose you catchee he!" said Dickie.

It was a terrible temptation for the boys to resist. They fought against it for a time, but finally Desmond said,

"How could we kill him, Dickie?"

"Yes, Dickie, how could we catch the beast?" said Ted.

The boys had fallen. They would disobey. Ah! well, let us be lenient; we can't put old heads on young shoulders.

"Catchee he," cried Dickie. "Foof! plenty quick. One rope, one bit of chain, and one baby for bait. Dat am how to catchee he. Den we draw up and shoot."

"What!" cried Desmond, "a baby? O, Dickie, go away at once."

But Dickie Straw only laughed.

"All same one nigger baby," he answered. "Outside clothes, inside one big piece of po'k (pork), and one big hook. De 'gator smellee he, once, twice. Den he snap!"

So it was all arranged. The priest would not be told, but Aileen was, and determined to make one of the party.

At the appointed time the three were not far from the side of the little dark lake, and waiting for Dickie Straw. It was quite early on a beautiful morning, just the time when 'gators, like little boys, are hungry. Presently through the trees Dickie himself was seen coming along, nursing his pork baby in its long clothes, and making believe to sing it to sleep, by a song of his own composition, for Dickie Straw was a negro bard and poet laureate of the whole plantation.

"O, I deahly lub de life we all does lead,
On de ole plan—ta—shee—on
An' de 'gator boots dat ole massa wears
When massa's got he on
Ye-ee—O! Sleep my Joe,
My leetle po'k baby O!
Ye-ee!"

The last "ye-ee!" was a shrill quivering scream, and next moment Dick Straw had placed "de chile" in Ted's arms, with orders to throw it far out into the lake.

Honest Charlie Chat, whose smile was almost as

broad as a 'gator's, licked his lips and sniffed the baby. He would not have objected to go halves with the cayman.

Next moment there was a splash in the water, and a huge nose appeared above the dark deep water.

"Frow de baby, now, Massa Ted," cried Dickie, much excited. "Frow he quick."

That cayman was very tame, and snapped the bait at once.

"No draw in yet, wait," shouted Dickie, as he rushed away with the rope and made it fast with a round turn about a tree. In a few minutes that cayman appeared above water. He was caught and knew it.

They tried to land him, but it was found impossible, so while Dickie held the rope Ted and Dess seized their rifles and settled down to serious shooting, and in a few short minutes the 'gator's horrible form floated dead above the water and was easily enough dragged to the side.

Dickie quickly rounded in the slack of the rope and again made fast, and so the dead monster was anchored, and there would be left until men from the hacienda should go to bring home his skin.

Back through the beautiful woods they now started, but settled in a green glade not far up, to discuss a humble repast, for which the excitement and their exertions had given them ample appetites.

They were just finishing with some delicious

fruit when Aileen gave a little shriek, and looking in the direction in which her frightened eyes were bent, behold! two of the ugliest ruffians that one ever beheld. Machetes hung by their sides and they carried a gun each.

"Who are you?" cried Ted. "Spaniards or rebels?"

"Neither, my friend," replied the bigger and uglier. "We are noble subjects of King Loot. Hand over your watches, your jackets and that young and very sweet girl's mantle. Ha! I've a good mind to kiss her."

Ted was a brawny young athlete. He could put up his fifty-six-pound weight, five times in succession and not get red in the face.

The allusion to Aileen fired his blood, and no panther ever sprang on his prey with greater vim than he went for that bandit. The other villain fired point blank at Dess—and missed.

He had no time to load again, for Charlie Chat and brave Desmond attacked. Down he went howling for mercy.

"Run home with Aileen," cried the lad to Dick.

Dickie Straw needed no second invitation.

Ted had twisted the gun from his enemy's hands before a sailor could have twice said binnacle. It went off in the air. He tossed it away, then confronted the hulking half-caste bandit. He had cast his jacket and looked—as he lifted his "fives"—in prime form. The fellow didn't like that way

of fighting and was about to draw his machete when he was levelled with a stunning blow between the eyes, and he bellowed for mercy.

Ted relieved him of his weapon. Dess did the same by his man. The dog was called off, and the two young fellows, rifles in hand, levelled at the bandits' heads, sat quickly down to await developments.

No one spoke, but the villains knew they were caught.

It was one whole hour before Dickie Straw returned with six white men from the plantation.

The prisoners were at once bound, and marched to the hacienda, and that same evening were sent with a strong escort to the nearest Spanish camp, and delivered over to justice, with Señor Adeane's compliments.

What became of them our heroes never found out. The Spanish officer was pleased to have them, that is all, and told the escort that they had been very much wanted indeed.

It is within the bounds of possibility that they made soldiers of these subjects of King Loot, but it is far more probable that they hanged them on the nearest and most comfortable tree and finished off by riddling their bodies with shot.

It is needless to add that Desmond and Ted were both forgiven.

* * * * *

There is very little good, or evil either, that no one can affect in this world, and strange as

it may appear, it is nevertheless true that Adeane's sugar-mills were soon once more in operation. He did not care to sell; he dared not export, except under ruinous conditions, but he could store. And that he did, although his men were working but half time.

It may be said by some that Adeane's ethics were not of the highest order, as he was really playing a double game: pretending a friendship with the Spaniards that he did not feel, yet at the same time, doing all he could to help the insurgents. Well, the probability is that any other millionaire would have tried to save his property and estates in Cuba in precisely the same way. His losses had been very great of late years and he had a nervous dread of losing far more. But it must not be forgotten that he was in a strange land, and that his tender Irish heart could not help melting at the sorrows and sufferings of the unfortunate Cubans.

Weyler had decided upon laying waste the whole island, as we have already seen, and therefore the non-belligerents had been ordered into the cities or commanded to live in a place set apart for them near these. "To live," did I say? Nay, but to die, or starve and rot of fever.

It was a blessing for Cuba when the wretched inhabitants saw the last of so foul a fiend as Weyler.

For a month or two life on the old plantations went on much as it had done before the war, and everyone was contented and happy enough.

Then news came from far over the sea—from New York itself, indeed, that America was wakening up and that war was now inevitable.

The Spaniards would do nothing wisely, nor take any good advice, but were determined, they said, to carry the civil war on to the bitter end, should that not come for years.

And now Adeane's sympathies took a new form. He determined to assist the insurgents with a money loan. He first and foremost sought the advice of great statesmen in America, and waited for their reply. That came, in spite of the Spaniards, and it was in Adeane's favour.

But who could be trusted to take money to the insurgents? Hodson? Yet, he could ill spare him.

Desmond was as brave a lad as ever trod the decks of a British or American ship, and the boy of barely sixteen determined to offer his services. Nay, but he did more; he told his father plainly that unless he should be allowed to visit the insurgent leaders with the assistance of which they stood so much in need, he would leave the hacienda and join their ranks as a humble private.

At last his parents consented.

Well, boys have done far more daring deeds than that on which Desmond was now to embark.

The enemy, or in other words, the Spaniards were now to the east of the hacienda and it was deemed impossible to cross their lines or to rush the barbed wire trochas.

Desmond had thought the whole thing out in bed, and next morning presented his plans to his father. All he wanted was the money—no small sum, indeed, though it was not in gold—and the loan of his parent's pass, which had been signed at Santiago.

On the morning after, he bade his mother and sisters farewell—both were in tears—and started on horseback for Santiago.

And we, too, must leave the plantation for a time and follow the adventures of this brave and clever lad.

CHAPTER VIII

“Then Desmond Felt That His Hour Had Come”

“The boy stood on the great ship’s deck,
Beside his captain brave;
The waves were roaring all around,
Beneath—a watery grave.

“‘Go, save yourself,’ the captain cried,
‘You’re far too young to die,’
But—calm—replied the sailor lad,
‘When you go, so shall I.’”—*Loss of the Victoria.*

HAD you met my youngest hero, Desmond Adeane, in a drawing-room, you would have seen nothing in either his face or bearing to lead you to suppose he was very brave. You would have put him down as a gentle and refined boy, kind and good, handsome enough, but of a somewhat shy and retiring disposition.

And yet at heart he was a young lion.

Nor do I think that boys like this are extremely rare in our navy (mercantile or royal) or in the navy of the United States.

I look upon the poem by Mrs. Hemans, commencing,

“The boy stood on the burning deck,
Whence all but him had fled;
The flame that lit the battle’s deck,
Shone round him o’er the dead——”

as simply a very pretty flight of imagination. But I could quote many, very many, true instances of real heroism in boys of even fifteen.

What about the dear lad that stood on the bridge of our grand but unfortunate man-o'-war, H. M. S. Victoria, beside his captain.

"Save yourself, save yourself, my boy," cried the captain to his midshipman.

Then came the quiet reply:

"No, sir, if you are to go down in the ship, I shall go too."

And both sank with the foundering man-o'-war.

I read with much amusement the other day the account of the ensign who was sent on shore to inform the governor of a certain Spanish town in Cuba, that if he did not surrender the place at once, the United States man-o'-war outside would bombard it.

This lad, as the story goes—and I have not the slightest reason to doubt its authenticity—was not over fifteen, and he was small for his age. Small, but full of grit and fire, and perhaps even a trifle cheeky, which is excusable at this time of life. Doubtless he wore his side arms, and a revolver and as the boat pulled swiftly away from the ship's side he stood in the stern sheets with the rudder ribbons in his hands, and the Stars and Stripes floating behind—

"The flag that *means* to brave a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze."

Perhaps there was a bit of a coral bar to get over, with big seas and breakers roaring and swelling thereon. But the boat would jump it and go in on the largest roller.

"In bow!" I think I hear him shout as she gets nearer to the shore. "Way enough! Oars!"

And the gig scrapes the shingle.

Accompanied by one of the men he marched straight to the governor's house.

"I want to see the governor immediately."

A gray-haired Spanish official came quietly into the office.

"Si, señor, but I regret to say His Excellency is two miles from here. But we can get a carriage, and I shall drive you to him."

"Drive me!" cried the bold ensign, with his hand on the hilt of his dirk. "How dare you address me so! I stand here, sir, the representative of one of the greatest naval powers on earth. No, you shall fetch him here, and quickly too. I shall remain till he comes."

The old man is said to have trembled, but he obeyed orders, and in a comparatively short time the governor arrived, all bows and politeness:

"I have short time to parley," cried the young ensign. "I have but to say that if you do not send off to my ship, and surrender within half an hour, *I* shall bombard your town. Good-morning!"

And off to the beach the bold youth strutted.

While nearing the ship he met the commander in his boat, and told him what he had done.

This officer laughed good-naturedly, but —

“I think we’ll give him an hour,” he said.

I must not trench on the good nature of my readers by making further digressions, else I could give a score of illustrations of the pluck and courage of boys of only fifteen years of age or younger.

As he rode away from the plantation, accompanied by a negro, who would take back the horse, Desmond felt more real freedom in his heart than ever he had known before. The day was beautiful, yet not too hot, and though the road was rough, this gave his attendant a better chance of keeping up with him. When it was smoother—winding through a wealth of flowery woodlands, the kind-hearted lad took the young darkie up behind him, so that one way or another, stopping only once to feed and water the nag, and refresh themselves, Desmond galloped up to the city a good hour before sunset.

He was duly challenged by the rascally-looking and ill-dressed sentry, and felt now that daring and cheek alone could serve him.

“No, señor,” said the fellow, shouldering arms, “you cannot pass. You cannot pass. I have my orders!”

“How dare you talk to *me*, sir. I am in the confidence of the governor himself.”

“Turn out the guard!” he shouted.

With praiseworthy speed a sergeant and two privates came rushing forth.

"This fellow," continued Desmond, "would bar my ingress. I come with an important message from my father, the well-known millionaire, Captain Adeane—a non-combatant—and desire to be conducted to the house of the governor immediately."

The sergeant saluted.

Cheek had won the day.

"A non-commissioned officer shall conduct you, young señor, to the hacienda of the governor. Luckily he is at home."

In a quarter of an hour's time, Desmond, with his broad hat in his hand, stood in the governor's presence.

Now it so happened that at his father's hacienda several of the servants had lately been complaining of illness, though it was evidently nothing serious.

This, however, was Desmond's excuse for his appearance here.

The governor received him most kindly, and Dess formulated his request that a doctor might be "lent" to visit the hacienda, as it was possible yellow-jack might make its appearance.

"I have a good horse," added Desmond, "and with your permission, sir, the doctor can have that, for I shall prefer staying here for a week at least—to enjoy myself."

"Boy-like!" said His Excellency, smiling. "So

you shall, under my protection. You may do as you please."

"I mean to," thought Desmond.

But shortly after he thanked the governor and took his leave.

For two or three days he was a prominent figure at the —— Hotel, where he made himself a great favourite with everyone, especially with the prettiest girls of the establishment.

Fishing seemed to be his chief delight, and every evening on his return he handed his "catch" to the manager.

Every morning too, before starting for his hired boat, he paid his bill. This was his pleasure, he said. "Yes, and it was likewise his policy."

But one day he asked the boatman to clap on sail—there was a spanking breeze from the southeast—and take him many miles along the shore.

His crew did not hesitate, they knew they would be well paid.

It was a delightful sail, and as they had started early, the day was all before them. Dess had not forgotten to bring with him an excellent luncheon, and over and above this he had provisions enough in his knapsack to last him, if he exercised economy, for two or three days, in his journey through the woods and wilds.

By afternoon they were opposite a small sandy bay, and here Dess said he could land if they could rush the bar. They did not refuse, though the

waves were breaking thereon with a roar like distant thunder. There always is a gateway or gap in these coral reefs, however, where the water is rolling, but smooth, and this they managed to find. Sails were lowered. Out went the oars and while Desmond steered, onward with the speed of a flying train, rushed the boat. There was danger on each side, a huge wall of breaking tumbling water and the gap was narrow. The slightest wrong turn of the rudder would have been fatal, but though the little craft was half swamped she got through, and now they were in calm blue water, the white silvery bottom of which they could see, with here and there long patches of black trailing seaweed, like mermaid's hair.

In a few minutes our youthful adventurer stood safe and sound on the sand.

Much to the men's surprise they were paid at once.

"Shall we not take you back, señor?"

"No," said the boy, laughing, "I shall probably walk to Santiago later on in the moonlight. Adios! I shan't forget to look you up."

The boy meant what he said, but he expected it would be changed times before he entered the city again.

He disappeared into the jungle as he spoke, and was soon hidden from view by the spreading mangrove trees and the cactus bushes already in crimson bloom.

"Mate," said the boat-owner to his companion. "That boy means mischief. He has been a spy in Santiago, and he is now making straight for the camping-grounds of the rebels."

"What shall we do? Follow and recapture him?"

"No, he is armed and we are not. The young *villano* would give us *convulsiones* (fits)."

"See," he added, "the wind has changed and is stronger now, and all in our favour. Let us return at once and inform the authorities. We will be rewarded, and the boy will swing."

So high was the wind that under sail the boat went dancing homeward, and in three hours' time they had reached Santiago, which the reader will note lies at the head of a gulf or bay.

The military commander was greatly annoyed and alarmed. He saw the governor immediately.

The latter stamped his foot, and I fear he swore a little, though in Spanish.

"My eyes are opened. The boy is a spy. The story about sickness at Adeane's hacienda was but a blind. But, by heavens! there *shall* be sickness there. Meanwhile, commander, to horse! Take thirty men, for you may meet the insurgent bands. You know the roads beyond the Sierra Maestra."¹

"I do, every inch of them."

"Then as he is on foot, you can head him off."

"Certainly, governor. Shall we hang him, señor?"

¹ A range of mountains.

"No, commander. Rope him tightly, and bring him to me alive. We shall try him and hang him here. Do your work well, and you shall command the forces I will send to raze the hacienda of the traitor Adeane to the grounds."

"I shall lose no time, señor!"

And off he set to make immediate preparations for the pursuit.

Meanwhile, under the light of the moon, and by aid of his little compass, Desmond was hurrying on in a northerly direction.

Through a dark deep forest at first for five long miles, a forest that the moonlight could only penetrate here and there, so that the lad often stumbled in the darkness, or stuck in thorn and cactus bushes, tearing his clothes, and wounding cheeks and hands.

There were no wild beasts here that he knew of; only huge bats flew over him, and terrible shrieks and yells were heard now and then in the woods, which almost made his blood run cold. They were so human-like that he tried in vain to disabuse his mind of the notion that some poor women were being ill-treated and murdered.

But he was clear of the forest at last. He looked at his watch. He had taken two hours and a half to get through. He glanced back now with a shudder at the gloom he had penetrated, then once more at his compass, and went marching on.

Fire-flies danced and bobbed around him everywhere, and the mosquitoes bit him vengefully.

Far ahead, looking greenish-yellow in the moonlight, were the mountains. He must cross these somehow, anyhow, or wind up the glens and around them.

He was very tired now, and sleepy, but he dared not rest. There was a suspicion in his mind that as soon as the boatmen returned, the hue and cry would be raised, and men sent out to head him off. In this, as we have seen, he was right.

No, he must not rest yet awhile. But he was hungry and must eat. He took but a moment to get out a few sandwiches, and he ate those as he hurried along. After a draught of water from a neighbouring rill, he felt better and less tired. But he must pray as he marched. And he did so, right earnestly to God, that his steps might be guided safely to the far-distant camp of the down-trodden Cubans, and that he might be the means of helping them on their thorny path to freedom. I myself have had very many answers to my prayers, often enough when danger and death stared me in the face in foreign lands, and when I could see no way out except through the dark vale.

But now Desmond found a road, a rough and rutty one it was, but it evidently led over the Sierras.

He followed this for miles through the now silent bush. Presently he came to a tilled field, and not far off was a hut in which a light was burning.

There was no one near, so he helped himself to

some sweet potatoes, stowing them away in his knapsack.

Who lived, he wondered, in that squalid cottage, so far up among the rugged hills? Would it be safe to venture near, he asked himself.

Anyhow, his curiosity impelled him to do so, though he kept well in the shade of the towering cactus bushes.

The door was shut, but he heard voices within, and made certain that they were those of insurgents. Then very cautiously he peeped from a distance through the little window. There was no glass, only an opening.

They were Spaniards—three in all, smoking and drinking wine, and on the table before them lay a heap of watches and trinkets, evidently loot. They had been on the war-path, without doubt, and glad indeed was Desmond to find himself once more back on the road. A kind of nightmare terror now seized upon him, and he never ceased trotting for five more miles, when he came to a little lake, fed by the streams from the hillsides.

Near it was another house, but no light streamed from this. It was close to the roadside, and his heart beat quick, with a nameless dread, when beside the door he saw lying on their backs, the bodies of a man, a woman and a child of tender years. They had evidently been dead but a short time, for the blood still trickled from their ghastly wounds.

Desmond stood for a moment as if transfixed. He should never forget that sight the longest day he lived. Night-flies hummed above the corpses, the mosquitoes sang around them in clouds, and there were the huge bobbing three-eyed fire-flies, the light from their bodies brighter far than that reflected from the moon.

All that night Desmond, tired, excited and weary, walked on and on. The moon sank before the sun got up, and it grew very dark now. Fearing to lose the path he lay down, but resolved he would not sleep. If he did he told himself anything might happen. Soldiers from Santiago might give him a rude awakening, and if even friendly insurgents found him, and farther on met Spaniards, they would, at the bayonet's point, have to tell the truth and give the boy away.

But sleep he did and that too for many hours.

He sat up at last and rubbed his eyes. The sun was high in the heavens, and for half a minute he wondered where he was and what he was doing here.

At any other time his heart would have thrilled with joy and admiration at the beauty of the scenery beneath, above and around him. The mountain peaks clad in flowery bushes or green cactus intermingled with vines, the jungle still nearer and ahead; the grand old forests that lay below and the glimpses of the blue, blue sea, far, far beyond.

But as he sat there, still but half awake, with a score of parrots chattering near, he noticed a horse and rider just ascending the path at a bend of the road.

More horsemen followed. A small army it seemed to him.

And they were Spaniards, and armed to the teeth. Poor Desmond was brave but he trembled now, as he crawled out of the way far into the bush where he trusted he could see without being seen.

The road was not wide enough for two to ride abreast, so that many took short cuts through the scrub in order to keep up with their comrades.

One of these soldiers passed so near to the bush where Dess lay hidden, that he could have touched his horse's posterns.

The boy had his dagger and revolver handy, and determined that, if discovered, he should sell his life dearly.

But the cavalcade rode by and he breathed more easily now. Only two things were certain. He must not travel by day, and when night came he must keep his weather ear and eye lifting, to be ready at a moment's warning to dart into the bush.

But where should he hide? There were caves in plenty, but no doubt on returning the Spaniards would examine these.

Well here on the hills were many marvellous and strange trees. One stood almost alone; a kind of cedar very close and very dense. He climbed up

and near the top found a kind of lubber's-hole through which he forced himself. Parasitic trailing flowers made him here quite a bower, and in a more safe place he could not have been. Yet there was light enough for him to see to read a little Spanish story book he had brought in his knapsack.

It was a strange wild tale of adventure and fighting in the Highlands of Spain, of knights in armour, a lady fair who had been taken prisoner by an evil-eyed baron, and cast into a dungeon in his old enchanted castle, of her rescue by her lover, the slaying of the baron and of his evil spirit in the shape of a dragon. Such a book boys would hardly read in our enlightened days. However it served a good purpose now and whiled away the time.

Then utterly worn out, Desmond determined to sleep, but he had his luncheon first, then with his cummerbund or sash he made himself fast to the tree with a reef knot, and in three minutes more he was far, far away in the land of dreams.

And the time flew by, hour after hour and still he awoke not. Curious birds alighted on the tree-top, and eyed him wonderingly with heads on one side.

"A real human biped!" they seemed to say.

"What on earth is he going to do here?"

"Going to build a nest, maybe?"

"I don't know, but suppose we peck his eyes out. They would eat as nice as sea-snails."

But these birds flapped their wings and flew off, for they could hear, ay and see the approach of armed men on horseback.

This aroused Desmond at last, and he listened with awe to the trampling of many horses' feet, mingling with loud voices in conversation.

They were the returning Spaniards.

"Ha!" cried the commander, "here under the shelter of this spreading tree shall we dine and drink. We have not found the spy, but men, we have done our duty."

"*Si por cierto!*" was the sergeant's stern reply.

"Stack arms, men! and circle round."

Here was an adventure that poor Dess had not calculated on. However he believed himself safe.

Surely they would soon depart, however. Yet they seemed in no hurry, and the laughing and joking told the boy plainly enough that the wine was mounting to their heads.

"I'll read my story," said Desmond now.

He quietly took out the book.

But to his horror he let it slip from his grasp. He saw it slide silently over the green twigs, then—it descended and fell right in the centre of the carousing Spaniards.

They started to their feet.

"*Por Dios!*" the commander cried, "how came this book here?"

"The spy is hiding in the tree!"

Then Desmond felt that his hour had come.

CHAPTER IX

Such a Narrow Escape—Life Among the Rough Riders of Cuba

“Your children, wives and grandsires hoary —
Behold their tears and hear their cries!
To arms! to arms! ye brave!
The avenging sword unsheath.
March on! march on! all hearts resolved
On victory or death.”—*De L'Isle*.

It did, indeed, look as though his hour had come, but he resolved to die like a hero.

He did not take long to make up his mind about that.

He hastily undid the knot in his cummerbund and drew up his legs as two or three bullets from Mauser rifles went fizzing past him.

A call was now made for volunteers to swarm up the tree, and presently from the crackling of branches he knew that men were in it.

Through the lubber-hole, however, come they must, one at a time and head first.

The boy was very pale now, but he grasped his revolver.

“If I die,” he said, half aloud, “it shall not be by myself. I shall have company!”

Desmond had never yet drawn human blood. But now—well, it must be life for life.

So he sat crouching there with his eyes on the lubber-hole.

But, lo! assistance was at hand.

At sea and on the war-path nothing is really certain save the unexpected.

A rattling musketry fire was heard from a neighbouring thicket and next moment the clattering of horses' hoofs.

"To arms! to arms!" was now the cry from the Spaniards, and next, "To horse! to horse!"

But the rough riders were on them before they could mount. They cut the enemy down right and left, and only very few escaped, and these the insurgents did not care to follow.

In the lull that succeeded, Desmond shouted, "Below there!" as if he had been in the foretop of a ship at sea.

"Someone in the tree! Who are you?" cried a voice from beneath.

"I am Desmond Adeane, son of the millionaire sugar-planter, and I was treed by the beastly Spaniards. I am on my way to the camp of General Garcia with funds to assist him. Will you body-guard me?"

"Certainly, if what you say is true. But come down."

"I cannot. Two of the enemy are still hidden below me in the cedar. Dislodge them and I'll descend."

"We'll soon do that."

In five minutes more, after a tussle in the tree, the men were pitched out of it. One branch, however, let them down to the next and their descent was slow and easy. When Desmond himself descended and stood laughing before the captain of this cavalry detachment, the prisoners were already pinioned. And Dess speedily convinced this officer of the truth of his statement.

The story of his somewhat droll adventures was received with a cheer, and soon—leaving the dead to the birds of prey and the wounded to die, should their comrades not return—the march into the interior was commenced.

In his heart Desmond could not help pitying the poor, pale, wretched prisoners, who were led or rather dragged along to their doom.

He thought probably that they were to be taken to Garcia's camp. But he noticed that the sergeant of the party was riding on ahead and carefully scanning every tree, as boys do when bird-nesting.

Presently he reined up at the foot of a species of spreading pine.

"This will do well, sir," he said. "These cowardly coyotes should thank us for finding them so comfortable a place in which to kick their last."

The prisoners answered never a word.

A soldier pulled out a flute and began to play a merry dancing tune. Lariats were thrown over the branches and in five minutes' time the poor prisoners, one after another, were hoisted with such a

jerk that their necks must have been dislocated against the limbs of the tree.

A few revolver shots were fired into them to make sure, then on marched the captain and his merry men.

Their very mirth was infectious, and despite the terrible scenes he had witnessed, Desmond soon found himself spinning yarns about his life at sea and in the Philippine Islands, that made everyone listen and laugh.

It was through a country of truly marvellous beauty and enchantment, this cavalcade of rough riders now went trotting along.

Sometimes, though, the path led through tall grass or dense jungle which it was difficult indeed to penetrate; sometimes straight over a steep hill, where the trees were sparse but still lovely, and anon by a still leaden mountain lake, or across a ford, where demon caymans lurked, kept well at bay, however, by the noise and splashing of the horses' feet.

One river with high rocky and fantastic banks, and lined by strange trees and feathery palms both great and small, appealed so to Desmond's love of romance, that he dropped behind to admire.

But the men in front shouted, rifles rang out in the still air, the boy's horse sprang forward, and as he looked fearfully around, he saw the loathsome head of a gigantic cayman reared above the water. Whether shot dead or not it suddenly disappeared.

And Dess knew without being told that his escape from a terrible death had been a very narrow one indeed.

The troopers bivouacked just one night on the road. Arms were stacked, horses hobbled, and while most of the men lay down to smoke, others were told off to cook a glorious stew.

After supper and some wine, all lay down and appeared to smoke themselves to sleep. But the smoke was really meant to keep away the biting insects.

Desmond covered his head quite up with his little handkerchief, and so slept soundly enough till sunrise, when the parrots awoke him.

That same evening they reached the rough riders' camp, and to the great joy of all they found General Garcia himself here.

A high-browed, dark-eyed, but handsome man, whose snow-white hair and beard showed that he was well advanced in years.

The officer introduced Desmond Adeane.

The general scanned him for a second or two with lowered brows as if he would read the lad's inmost thoughts.

But Desmond never quailed.

Then he smiled, and when he did so, he no longer looked severe, but kindly and even merry.

"You are honest. Come to my tent. I will see you alone."

Half an hour after this, when the boy came,

out, his face was beaming with joy, and he went directly to his new friend, the captain of the rough riders.

"I am to be permitted to go back home," he said, "or to join your corps. I should dearly love to be a rough rider. Will you have me?"

"You are very young," said Captain Godfrey. "Can you ride and shoot?"

"I have ridden a buck-jumper," replied Dess, proudly, "and I can shoot.

"See!" he added, drawing his revolver.

He raised the weapon at once and fired, and a stray sugar-cane thirty yards away was cut in two.

"Bravo! boy."

"I—I—really wasn't firing at the sugar-cane," stammered Dess, with splendid candour, "but at the palm two yards to the left. But that is a mere matter of detail, isn't it, sir?"

The captain laughed heartily.

"I'll mount you to-morrow, anyhow," he said.

That evening Desmond wrote a letter home, having found out that two scouts were going in his father's direction. In this he told him all that had happened, and that he was now a rough rider. He also warned him most earnestly to be prepared for a visit of the Don at any time, as all was discovered, and that no doubt Santiago had vowed vengeance.

There was much more in the lad's letter that need not be repeated.

Captain Adeane smiled when he read the letter. But he was pleased.

He hated the Spaniards now more than ever. Hitherto his motto had been: "It is better to flense a fool than fight him."

But now the die was cast. He had crossed the rubicon; and should go on, throwing in his lot with the insurgents.

Desmond had sent back the pass which his father had lent him. It was one which permitted the family of Adeane to go anywhere it chose in the island—the officers who might read it being warned that they must treat the bearer civilly, and supply him with assistance if needed.

This pass the captain placed in his pocketbook. It *might* or might not be useful.

As to the preparations to "repel boarders," as Adeane phrased it, the scouts found that they were almost completed, and that all the mill hands that could be spared were still actively engaged about them. I should mention that when this hacienda was first built, fearing that very dark and troublesome times were ahead, every window was furnished with an iron shutter, pierced with holes for rifle fire, so that the place could be turned into a fort at a few minutes' notice.

The scouts left, but told Adeane that they should hover near by for months and hoped to be the very first to bring him any news, if they noted any unusual stir in the enemy's camps.

The priest and the millionaire were as happy and merry now as if home again in dear old Ireland, but there were times when all alone by their two selves that they shook their heads and looked very serious indeed, when they thought of the dark cloud that hovered on the weather horizon of their lives.

One forenoon, for instance, they were walking inside the fortifications of the hacienda quietly and silently smoking.

"Well, Father McDowney," said Adeane, as he pitched away the end of an excellent cigar, "it may come all right, but I have grave doubts."

"Hush!" said the priest. "Pardon my bad English, but the divil a taste of a grave will there be about it.

"Why look ye," he continued, "our good ship here is so well fortified and so well supplied with cartridges and ammunition, with food and gunpowder, that bother my wig if we couldn't stand a siege for a month."

"You really think so, Father McDowney?"

"It's myself that does sure enough, and I'm not saying it either, simply to jolly you on. It is in downright earnest I am."

Adeane laughed now.

"Just do all you can anyhow to keep up my wife's and daughter's hearts. And do you know, father, that I regret now bringing them over from the Isle of Pines; or not taking them straight on to dear old New York."

"Well, it is there they'll all be safe and sound soon, perhaps. But I know what always cheers you up."

"Yes?"

"Take a walk round the inside of the forts."

They did so.

The fortifications were very simple but calculated to be effectual. Only that would remain to be seen. All round and round the whole establishment, including the great sugar-mill in the rear, ran a deep protecting ditch. High enough when one was in it to quite conceal the body when one stooped a little. Beyond this was a trocha-like arrangement of the most intricately mingled strong barbed wire. This might be cut, but not if a few brave men held the trenches. And these trenches communicated with the cellars of the house by means of a zigzag ditch, which was also connected with the great mill. At each corner of the out works was a huge iron tank with holes to fire from, and thus enfilade an attacking enemy. These tanks were roofed over and entered from below.

Moreover they could obtain a good view of nearly all the surrounding country.

If the worst came to the very worst, Captain Adeane determined he would fight with bombs or large bottles of petroleum which should explode when hurled into the ranks of an attacking foe.

Well, therefore, might he consider himself fit to stand any ordinary siege.

On the hacienda roof, which was flat and covered with lead like an old-fashioned church tower, sentries were stationed day and night. And these could communicate with Adeane in his room, at any hour, by means of the telephone.

* * * * *

The rebellion dragged on its slow and lengthy way. It was a huge dragon in this fair and lovely isle of the ocean, and its bulk was over all the land. A dragon whose terrible scaly arms were red with the blood of innocent babies and tender women, a dragon whose very breath withered all things as it crawled along.

The effects of General Weyler's *Reconcentrado* measure was still felt. It brought in its wake disease and starvation ; for those who were pent up in the towns under the most unsanitary conditions, had only one door of escape and that led through the valley and the shadow of death.

I do not wish to paint my story either black or red, but it can do the reader no harm to know, that out of 400,000, no less than 200,000 of the wretched captives died of starvation and pestilence combined.

Too shocking to think of, is it not ?

Well, let us change the subject, and once more dip into the glory and the romance of war.

While Adeane's mills go merrily round and all his crops are being gathered and turned into sugar, and this itself is being refined by a new method in-

troduced by himself, Desmond is leading the life of a real rough rider, and, with his splendid regiment or companies of it, is scouring the country, and fighting the Dons wherever found and always with success, whatever the garbled bulletins of the enemy may have said to the contrary.

Letters found their way frequently to the hacienda. They were written in sylvan camps, or far in forest lands, in jungles deep, or on the mountain-sides, and written as often as not, perhaps, on a drum as a writing-desk. But they were always most cheerful, especially those to Aileen and dear old Teddy McCoy. Dess, of course, could not describe one half he came through, and very often a letter would end most abruptly, as the trumpet sounded "To horse and away."

Teddy was a man now in size and wisdom, if not in years. He had been elevated to the post of Adeane's chief clerk, and though the duties were light, they required a considerable deal of thought.

He was enabled, however, to take plenty of exercise and even on his rides Aileen accompanied him, and not only Aileen, but Charlie Chat, and, strange to say, Cheese invariably occupied that portion of the Spanish saddle that was raised slightly in front.

He loved Aileen very dearly indeed, she was not only so beautiful, with her dark hair and those sad and bonnie blue eyes, but most innocent in manner and naïve. He loved her as a brother loves a sister; at any rate, that is what he told himself.

It might be said that the girl was little more than a child. In years, yes, but in Cuba marriages are known to take place even with young ladies of thirteen, and a maiden is considered old at twenty.

Far down in the scale of society though young McCoy's parents had been, he himself, was a gentleman of honour with a heart as brave as a lion's.

Garcia was a great and a victorious general who drummed the Spaniards into their biggest towns and laying siege to the smaller, turned them out of these with great loss, capturing guns, ammunition and stores of every sort.

But with the rough riders, Desmond lived almost constantly in the saddle and always in camps. If they were to occupy these for even a few days they built gipsy tents. But often when attacked they had to set these hastily on fire and either fight or fly.

McDonnell, the colonel of this splendid corps, nearly always preferred to fight, but a good man will conserve his troops when oppressed by fearful odds, and this officer, though brave and dashing to a fault, had also the bump of caution.

During the months that our hero, Desmond, spent in the camps of the rough riders—the real cowboys of Cuba—he seems to have gone everywhere, done everything and seen almost everybody of note.

It is no wonder that he got brown and hardy.

But there came another change, and this was in his character. The romance of war he loved from the first, but the scenes of havoc, of burning and bloodshed, were, at first, very harrowing. When he closed his eyes in camp after a hard day's "man-hunt," these all appeared before him. When he slept at last they took possession of his dreams, only the horror of them was magnified a hundred-fold. He saw dead men, fearfully gashed and contorted, stretched in every conceivable position on the battlefields among the lovely woodland scenery, or near the ridiculous little forts and stupid trochas, with which the Spaniards had cobwebbed the island; and wounded men, too, writhing in pain and torture, many of them with the death-sweat already standing in cold beads on their brows. He heard young fellows deliriously calling for the mothers, the sisters, or sweethearts they should never see again.

Then the scene might change and he was in a village among blazing huts, in the lanes of which, lay murdered women and children just as Weyler's troops had left them, and perhaps as he gazed in horror at these, some monster cayman would come crawling from a stream and bear away a corpse, and at this he would awaken with a scream.

"What is the matter, sonny?" some kindly voice would be sure to exclaim. And Desmond would sleep again, only to see other scenes a little less horrible; burnt fields, the white smoke rising like

a mist therefrom, and sugar factories wrecked beyond all recognition; or he would be in the thick of a terrible fight on an open plain, with men falling fast around him, or engaged in derailing some armoured train from Havana. And it might be nearly morning before scenes more calm and beautiful found their way into his dreams, and he saw charming scenery or green fields with pleasant streams meandering through them and beautiful cows quietly browsing, as if there were no such things as war and cruelty in the world.

But after even six weeks he was a hardened, weather-stained young soldier, and horrors came not now to his dreams by night, no matter what he saw by day.

Such was the change wrought in the boy's character.

CHAPTER X

A Bleeding Country Struggling for its Liberty

"Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Heavenly Father! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."—*Patrick Henry*.

"Weep no more, nor sigh, nor groan,
Sorrow calls no time that's gone;
Violets plucked, the sweetest rain
Makes not fresh to grow again."—*Fletcher*.

THERE came one day to Garcia's camp an adventurous officer from New York, and his visit did more to raise the hopes of the Cubans than anything else that had yet occurred.

The bitter cry of this sorrowful republic had floated far to the north, and found echo and response in the hearts of every man, woman and child worthy to be called American.

The officer, whose name was Rowan, had come through many dangers on his way hither; indeed his journey had been quite romantic, sometimes very unpleasant for him. Nevertheless, he had come to interview Garcia, not actually to promise aid from America, but with the view of finding out how far the Cubans could help themselves in the

island, if a Yankee invasion, blockade and bombardment took place from sea.

This visit then was a secret mission, most faithfully and most daringly carried out.

Having done his duty, Rowan rode off once more, and finally made his escape northward and reached New York in perfect safety.

But the news spread among the insurgents and gave every one heart.

From east to west the good tidings ran like wild-fire. The *reconcentrados* around the towns heard them and it helped to heal their ailments. God had heard their prayers, their blood had cried unto heaven, and He the mighty Lord of all, who moves in so mysterious a way, would send assistance, and cut off their cruel enemies from among men; the Spaniards themselves heard the news, not only in Cuba, where they trembled, but in Spain, where they pretended to know no fear.

"America, indeed!" cried statesmen, derisively. "America fight Spain, with her chivalry, her ancient name and fame,—and her vast fleet. It is really too ridiculous!"

"I say, have you heard the news?" one man would ask another at his club, or on the street.

"No. What is the last?"

"America has gone mad!"

"Mad?"

"Yes; *amigo mio*, *los Americanos condenados* (the Yanks') are going to throw in their lot with

the rebels and sweep the might and the right of this great nation clear out of Cuba."

"Ha! ha! ha! Ho! ho! ho! The best thing I have heard for a long time!"

And Spain began to look at her pistols; in other words, to count the number of her battle-ships, new and old, and a splendid array they made—on paper. Spain was all excitement. Had they not been the greatest naval nation the world ever saw? Had they not laid the world bleeding and begging at their feet? Would not proud England herself have been conquered, and Queen Elizabeth made prisoner but for the unlucky storm that arose and scattered the Armada? And was she now going to lose a single possession or lower her beautiful flag on any island of the ocean at the bidding, the threats or the guns of such a country as America, that had no army other than a mob of cowboys and roughs, and no navy worth thinking twice about? Bah! The Yanks would rue the day they interfered with proud Spain's private affairs. Their insolence should be punished, and the "bird o' freedom," that eagle whose soaring they boasted so much about, would come tumbling down with a broken wing. Hurrah! the grand old days of chivalry and romance and glory were returning to Spain once more.

"We shall thrash America," cried the clubmen, "enrich ourselves with an immense indemnity, and constitute ourselves once more a first-class power."

"It is really very foolish of America," gallants

would say to their bewitching partners in ball-rooms, and the dark-eyed beauties looked lovingly, admiringly at these heroes as they spoke, "very foolish (*idiota*). One can hardly help pitying them. Increase their national debt. Produce a stagnancy they will not recover from in a generation.

"And you really think, *Carlo mio*, we can conquer them?"

"Conquer them! We shall whip them as little boys are whipped at school. Our fleets shall sail shortly, or as soon as war is proclaimed. We shall meet and destroy the American navy with one squadron, another shall hover around Cuba and Porto Rico, and a third bombard and destroy every coast city they possess. We shall make peace at last, but it will be in the capitol at Washington. It is the best thing that ever happened for Spain!"

And the news was heard at the hacienda. A scout brought a very long letter to Captain Adeane early one morning, and he read it to all hands at the breakfast-table.

Mrs. Adeane smiled sadly.

"O, these wars," she said, "when will they cease?"

"I guess," said Adeane, "I guess, my dear, it is a higher Power that ordains them, and for a good reason. This world isn't all, and our insight is very limited."

"O mamma, I love war and heroes," said Aileen, enthusiastically. "And I dearly love Ted there."

He's going to be a real hero and fight like Dess. Poor Dess!"

The doctor smiled.

"When you're done with me, captain," he said, "just pop me on board a Yankee ship. I want to see all the fun I can."

"So do I," cried Aileen, roguishly.

Poor child! She little knew what was before her!

* * * * *

Brave though the Cubans were and clever their generals, I do not wish to imply that they always got the best of it. For often indeed had they to retreat from a fort they had attacked, small and ridiculous though these were, and sometimes they were overpowered even in the open. When they retreated, they never failed to take their wounded with them.

Their hospitals were well looked after by men and women nurses, although doctors were very scarce. Huge tents or marquees they were, built away in some sparsely tree'd glen, on ground as high and cool as possible and near to water.

And I know of no horrors so terrible—in any history I can remember, even Biblical—as those the cowardly Spaniards with their cruel generals—especially Weyler—brought upon this poor bleeding country struggling so bravely for its liberty. But they spared not even the sick and wounded.

One day in a bush fight, in which the insurgents were worsted, young Desmond was wounded. He remembered being hit. The bullet hardly gave him pain. He just felt dazed, and in the faint or dreams that followed, it seemed that it was some comrade who had been struck and not he. He was merely an onlooker.

Desmond was at this time a lieutenant, and well had he deserved the honour. He recovered his senses in a hammock, which was one of very many under the grass roof of a temporary hospital. These hammocks were low toward the ground, and supported by rough beams overhead. The hospital was silent enough when Desmond opened his eyes and found the surgeon, quite a young fellow, bending over him and asking him to swallow something he held to his lips. The hospital was silent because the brave fellows that were stretched therein scorned to moan or cry out with pain in presence of their comrades.

"Am—am I going to die, doctor?"

"No, old man, never a die this time. I've got the bullet out of your side and you're a bit low. That's all. I have no fear of you, but there are dead ones not far off."

"Doctor?"

"Yes."

"Did we win in that skirmish?"

"No, we got soundly thrashed. There was but a handful of you Roughs. You had dismounted,

you remember, and were fighting from tree to tree, when you fell."

"But your own head is bandaged!"

"Yes, I had an ugly rip from a Mauser."

"And yet you are working?"

"Who would work if the doctor didn't. He has to fight in the field and do his surgical duty afterward."

"Hark! what is that?"

There was now the rip—rip—rip of rifle fire and terrible shouting, and the Cubans rushed past the hospital pell-mell, some falling dead in their tracks.

Then came the horror! The Spaniards had attacked the other end of the hospital, and, awful to relate, were killing with knife and machete, the patients in their hammocks.

A terrible scene, and Desmond was quietly, prayerfully, waiting for death.

But the Cubans rallied, another hand-to-hand fight ensued, and the enemy fled. The hospital was fired, however, and in desperation and despite the pain he was suffering, he leapt from his hammock. Just outside he tumbled over the dead body of the surgeon.

The young lieutenant had no idea where he was going, and presently found himself all alone in a wood. He just wandered feebly onward, often having to clutch at a tree to prevent himself from falling. At last his head swam so that he was fain to sit down.

Two peasant women came along soon, and seeing his sad plight, bore him tenderly through the wood and high up the hill until they came to a hacienda. It was a small one and had never been discovered by the Spaniards, else it would have been speedily robbed and fired.

Desmond's wound had broken out afresh, and he fainted, but when he once more looked around him he believed himself in a dream.

He lay in a beautifully and tastefully furnished room, with snow-white and gilded walls and furniture to match. A lady in widow's weeds sat sewing by the open casement, an elderly gentleman whom she presently addressed as brother, was reading in a rocking-chair, and on his knee, with one soft white arm about his neck and a wealth of yellow hair hanging over her shoulders, was the prettiest girl Desmond had ever seen.

"That's a fairy," he said, *sotto voce*.

The child jumped down at once.

"O," she cried, joyfully, clapping her hands, "the boy officer has spoken."

She ran toward the couch on which poor Desmond lay, and gently smoothed his hair and patted his pale brow.

"Poor little boy!" she said, soothingly, "and has he no mother, then?"

Although in great pain, he could not help smiling.

"I'll be your loving mother," she continued, "and my mamma will be your granny."

A very pretty arrangement this, indeed. Well, she did not quite fulfil all the duties of a mother, perhaps, but during the many weeks of his confinement in this mountain retreat, Babette, as she was called, made him a very earnest and delightful little nurse. When Dess was a little better—the old man was his surgeon—he learned the sad story of this bereaved family. The tale was brief enough, and the boy officer knew better than to press for details.

The pretty chalet, so carefully concealed here in the mountains, had been built for a health retreat, and at most times the white-haired though still young-looking lady lived at the sugar factory many miles from here, with her husband, three brave sons almost grown to man's estate and little Babette. The brother was also a member of the family, and Madame Juan, or "Granny," as Dess had to call her, told him, with tears in her eyes, of the fearful attack made by the Spaniards on the factory. Her husband and sons and every servant were butchered, and those he saw around him escaped to the mountains, and here they would remain till the conclusion of the war.

Desmond's wound was not a dangerous one. It healed well and rapidly, but even after three or four weeks, he had so little strength that he could scarcely stand.

Babette was about fourteen, the age of his own sister, played on a harp and sang pretty songs to him, and hardly ever left him all day long.

Her merry chatter quite cheered him, and every morning she left to bring him a bouquet of beautiful flowers. At bedtime the fairy girl, as Dess called her, said "Good-night, child," and kissed him. "Be good and pray," she would add, as she disappeared through the doorway.

No wonder Dess loved her, which he did with all the Irish sentiment and romance in his nature.

"I shall marry you some day," he said to her once, as she knelt beside his low couch fondling his hand.

"O yes, of course," she answered; "and I'll still be your mother then, quite, won't I?"

* * * * *

Desmond Adeane had sent a messenger with letters for his home several times. They were never received, however, but why, he never could tell.

A Spanish paper one day, soon after Dess's last fight and the massacre at the hospital, found its way to the hacienda, which caused great trouble, though it left hope. The heading of one column was very sensational, and ran as follows:

GREAT BATTLE NEAR THE CANTO RIVER.
SEVERE FIGHTING.
ROUTE AND UTTER ANNIHILATION OF 2,000
INSURGENTS.
SPANISH LOSSES TRIFLING.

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But next morning came a scout with a letter from the colonel of the Cuban rough riders with whom Desmond was a great favourite. The boy it said was wounded and in the hospital.

Next day another scout arrived with another letter, containing an account of the murderous attack on the hospital.

"I deeply regret," it ran on, "that your poor, brave lad was among the slain, and as the hospital was afterward burnt, no bodies were recovered for burial. You can grieve but little less than I, for I dearly loved the lad. It is fate, alas! Fate and the fortune of war!"

* * * * *

This letter which was received early in the afternoon plunged everyone into a whirlpool of grief.

Tears were denied to Captain Adeane and the priest, but silently down her pale face fell those of Desmond's mother.

Aileen's agony was pitiable in the extreme. Hardly knowing what she did perhaps, she knelt beside Ted with her grief-stricken face and tangled hair on his knee.

"O Dessie! O Dess! Oh! oh! my brother! Will I never, never see you more? Why did you leave your Aileen? Leave us all? O brother! Were I only with you in death!"

Poor Charlie Chat with his ugly but anxious face, came running up to lick her hands, whining

piteously as he did so. She threw her arms around him.

"O Charlie," she cried, "poor Dess is dead—you—you—" She said no more but swooned upon the floor.

A whole month passed away and the first anguish of grief had settled down into silent sorrow, for as yet no one dared mention Dess's name for fear of harrowing the feelings of the others.

Aileen was seldom apart now from Ted.

"You must be my brother," she had said, and indeed the manly fellow tried all his arts to comfort her.

But, heigho! sorrows do not come singly, and one day a man on horseback galloped through the great gates and up to the office of Captain Adeane.

"They are coming!" he cried. "There is no time to lose. The Spaniards will be on us in force in little more than an hour."

Here was news indeed!

But Adeane never once lost his presence of mind.

CHAPTER XI

The Attack on the Hacienda—Determined Resistance

“And dar’st thou then to beard the lion in his den
The Douglas in his hall?

And thinkest thou, thence unscathed to go?

No, by St. Bride of Bothwell, no!”

—*Scott.*

THE scout would have stayed to assist in the defence of the beautiful hacienda and its splendid mills, but Adeane assured him that he would do better service if he could ride as far as the camp of the insurgents and order up assistance.

“I will give you a fresh horse,” said the captain.

“No, no,” said the man, patting the neck of his spirited nag. “Myself and Black Nell will manage it, if we are not headed off and pinked. But we shall die together. Shan’t we, Nell?”

The good horse whinnied.

Her master rode her to water, then he waved his cap as they passed through the great gates, and the forest soon swallowed them up.

Adeane closed the gates, and locked and barred them at once.

The mill was still whirling and rattling and groaning, but a blast from a little bugle that hung by his side, stopped this almost immediately.

Well did everybody about the place know what that signal meant, for all hands had been drilled to their duties and knew their quarters and plan of defence weeks before the approach of the vengeful Spaniards. In less than twenty minutes the iron shutters were drawn over the windows and the hacienda now became a fort. The ditches or trenches had been deepened still more, but by means of an earthen step a man could raise himself to make firing easy.

All hands were now armed, and the petroleum bombs were placed in a safe corner until they should be needed.

These were to be thrown by an easy kind of catapult, so there was not the slightest fear of their bursting before alighting. In case, however, that these should spread devastating fires, the ground for forty or fifty yards around the hacienda and mills had been completely cleared of bushes and the turf turned over.

Indeed everything possible had been done in order to save the hacienda and the lives of all within, for well Adeane knew, that in this case a lost battle would be followed by massacre and worse.

Mrs. Adeane and Aileen with the maid, and a few dark-skinned female servants were placed in an

inner room, and here too were Charlie Chat and Cheese, both of whom were wondering greatly what the matter might be.

It still wanted an hour of noon when the noise in the bush far below the high glen, where the buildings stood, told Adeane and his friends that the Spaniards were advancing.

The time was coming. The fight would soon begin. The men turned and shook hands. There was no appearance of fear or even nervousness about any of them.

"We are well defended," said brave Adeane. "Some of our defences are strange, but not so cruel as the works of Weyler. This is the wretch, boys, that said, 'war is war, and I will wade knee-deep in the blood of men, women and suckling babes, *but* the insurrection shall be quelled!'"

The priest laughed grimly.

"His fellows shall have a taste of their master's warfare now," he said.

Then everyone was ordered indoors. And there in the big hall with his people around him, the good father said brief but earnest prayer.

Then, lighter in heart now, all took their stations silently in the upper chambers of the hacienda. And Adeane's orders were that no one should fire or make the slightest noise, until he or one of his officers, Ted, Hodson or the priest gave the command.

Then they were to take sure aim, each man at the

enemy directly in front of him, so that not a cartridge should be thrown away.

All the fires at the mills, and the kitchen or cooking fires attached to the dwelling-house had been drowned out, and had you, reader, stood on either of the wooded hills that rose one at each side of the glen on this bright, beautiful day the scenery about and around you would have appeared to you like a fairy-land. It was a land of flowers and feathery palms at all events, and a land of bright-winged but silent birds, for parrots and parrakeets had long since been frightened away by the sound of the grinding mill. Then had you been quite a stranger your eyes would have fallen on that snow-white porticoed hacienda surrounded by its gardens and walks all emblazoned with the crimson and orange of a sub-tropical flora.

But not a sound could you have heard and not a soul was to be seen nor any living creature, not even as much as a pet cat or rabbit sleeping in the noonday sunshine. Perfect stillness and peace everywhere.

The attack on the hacienda had been planned to take place from three sides, viz, from the bush to the north or back part of the buildings, and from the high well-treed ground on each side.

But the captain-commandant of the enemy, who on his good nag could ride round the flanks and in the rear of each company of his men, who in numbers were 500 or over, told his officers at once that

the house must be deserted and their quarry or lawful prey fled.

Fire was opened nevertheless from all sides and the Mauser bullets fell like fearful hail upon the shutters, and this was kept up for fully ten minutes.

But never a single response came from the hacienda. It looked as cold, and was as silent as a charnel house.

Adeane went from room to room, where whites and blacks were equally mixed.

He was cheerfully excited.

"Keep up your hearts, my merry men. The enemy are only just expending their ammunition."

The bugle on a hill now sounded "Cease firing."

It was about midday and curious though it may appear these gallant soldiers of Spain must stop fighting and retire a considerable distance to eat their dinner, and smoke.

They had come to the conclusion that no one was at home in the hacienda and knowing this as if by instinct, Adeane, for a few moments, was strangely tempted to take his brave fellows out by the front and out-flanking the foe in the bush, attack them in force while their rifles were stacked.

But for his wife and child he would have done so. He communicated his idea to the doctor and to Father McDowney.

"Too risky and too rash!" said the latter.

It was half an hour before firing was resumed,

but the great white house remained as silent as a marble monument.

Then once more the bugle rang out merrily, and its notes were reëchoed from rock to rock.

The Spaniards could now be seen running down the hillsides with their guns at the trail and concentrating in the middle glen.

Satisfied that the family had gone, a combined attack was to be made in the rear.

Here stood the mill, and now Adeane cautiously and quickly withdrew five and twenty of his best men, through a sheltered pathway to the upper story of the great factory. The back part of this was also shuttered and pierced for rifle fire. Moreover, here stood that vengeful petroleum-throwing catapult which Hodson himself was going to handle.

The trunks of trees, some branchless, others with the branches on, were hauled down from the wood by the enemy, who now made their appearance.

They came on very slowly, pausing oftentimes to listen and look. Then more boldly, until they were within fifty, forty, thirty, yards of the trocha of wire.

"I know their game!" said the doctor. "They mean to bridge over the barbed wire fences, with the branched trees, scramble over and use the bare poles as battering rams."

"Most excellent plan indeed. But I object to being rushed. Hurry is bad for the nerves, I believe, doctor."

"That's so, sir."

"Are you ready, men?"

"All ready, sir!"

"Then take good aim and blaze away!"

The Spaniards were here, about 200 strong, the rest were still in the woods.

Hardly had Adeane spoken the last word ere volley after volley from the repeating rifles was poured into the villainous ranks of the enemy.

The confusion was terrible. For a moment they seemed too paralysed to move. Terrified moans arose from the wounded, while the living seemed inclined to huddle together for protection.

Up went the shutter, and out went the nose of the catapult.

"They want a stimulant," cried Hodson. "They shall have it. Teddy, feed my pet."

Ted cautiously placed in a bomb, and away it sped. Then bomb after bomb to the number of six.

Meanwhile with a wild shout the riflemen in the mill-loft kept up their fire, through the holes in the iron shutters.

There was a response from the skirmishers in the woods, but it had no effect. It was but half-hearted.

Were I to describe the scene that followed the explosion of those awful bombs, I should but harrow the feelings of my readers needlessly, and there are horrors enough described already with more, alas! to come. The fire spread in every di-

rection, but happily the volumes of thick black smoke hid the bodies of the writhing wretches on the ground.

Only a few escaped. The rest were suffocated.

Nothing could have succeeded better, therefore, than Adeane's plan of defence.

The rifles still rang out from the woods, but the firing ceased after a time.

The Spaniards had received a lesson.

The question that remained to be solved was this: "Would they return?"

No one was wounded inside as yet, and the catapult was uninjured.

* * * * *

The day went slowly by. Oh, *so* slowly, but the woods were now as still as death. Then, sunset and darkness ensued. A darkness that could be felt in the minds of this beleaguered garrison.

And in that darkness, what might not happen?

Adeane and the doctor now consulted together for a time, while the priest and Teddy bustled away to the kitchen to find food for the combatants and non-combatants of the garrison. All were hungry and not even Mrs. Adeane seemed much afraid, though the maid was.

Aileen went trotting off to help Teddy.

"Yes," she said. "Yes, brother, you must let me be busy. When I work I will not think and tremble."

On a sudden impulse Teddy took the beautiful child in his arms and kissed her tenderly.

"Always call me 'brother,'" he said, "till, perhaps, you may have an even fonder name for me."

And now having made up their minds, Adeane and his brave surgeon went alone to the mill, and first they carried down the light catapult placing it in a corner room of the hacienda itself. Then all the petroleum bombs.

Next they lit candles which they placed in positions whence their light might be seen through the shutters of the mill.

This was all.

They returned now, and carefully throwing down the little iron lids above the rifle-holes in the shutters, lit candles that the garrison might see to eat their food without any unsafe glimmer of light finding its way outside.

The same was done in the dining-room, and here the family supped.

Conversation was carried on in a low key, but no one now seemed afraid.

At ten o'clock the ladies retired, Adeane warning them not to be afraid whatever they might hear, and above all to be silent.

How slowly passed the night away! Adeane and his officers were slumbering in chairs, in an upper room, worn out at last.

Then about four in the morning, just at the time

when it is darkest and coldest, suddenly from a hill above the hacienda came the roar of a cannon like the crack of doom. They could hear the noise of the ball as it tore through the air and expended its force on the east wall of the mill.

Seeing the light glimmering there, the enemy had evidently concluded that there was the garrison.

And this was precisely what Adeane desired them to imagine. He thought the light would draw their fire if they brought up a piece of ordnance, and he cared not for the mill being destroyed so long as his people in the hacienda should be spared.

But more must be done, and with loaded rifles a party of ten of his best men, himself at their head, stood close by the mill loft ready to spring in and fire the moment the next ball struck.

They had not long to wait. In three minutes' time it dashed in a shutter and tore across the loft and out through another port.

Now was the time. They had noted the spot whence the blaze or spurt of fire came, and aiming as well as possible at that, they poured in what, in daylight, would have been withering volleys.

"Quick now, men. Come down! Your time is up!"

Alas! it was so for one man who was unable to escape soon enough. A cannon ball tore through his spine, and without a groan, he fell dead on the floor.

The same tactics and method of firing was kept

up for a whole hour. As soon as the report of the gun was heard, the brave little band rushed in and replied with volleys, three and sometimes four.

But one man more was killed and two were wounded. These last the doctor got lifted away and, following, attended to their wounds in one of the rooms of the hacienda.

But now it was evident that the enemy was about to alter its tactics. It was quite ten minutes before the next shot poured out from the wooded hillside. Well was it for Adeane and his men that they were outside the loft, for this proved to be a shell, and it burst square in the centre of the loft, which in a few minutes more was all in a blaze.

Luckily the wind was at present very light indeed, and blowing the smoke and flames northward and away from the hacienda.

So far this was good, but how long would the unequal conflict last and how soon might not the exasperated Spaniards commence to shell the house.

"We must be prepared for anything," said Adeane.

"May the Lord be on our side," said Father McDowney. "But, captain, would it not be well now before sunrise to make a bit of a sortie and an effort to capture that gun. The odds are terrible, I admit, but think of what our Irish ancestry did in the troublesome times against our 'friends' the fairplay Saxons, ha! ha!"

The warlike little priest laughed sarcastically.

"It is still dark," he continued. "We know where the gun is situated. Let us arm, and creep through the jungle on them, as quiet, to be sure, as a puma itself would."

"I will take your advice," said Adeane. "It is a forlorn hope, and may God speed you. How many men shall you want?"

"Twenty whites sure enough, with repeating rifles and twenty sharpest swords. *I* will lead them. Hurrah! We'll all be Irish, and make a wilder and bigger battle cry than any 500 Sassenachs could get out of their wheezy thrapples" (throats).

"Meanwhile," he added, "as the crowd of Dons will go yelling past the hacienda, let your trenches be manned with your bold blacks to give them fits as they fly."

In ten minutes' time, and in single file, brave McDowney and his fellows were making a detour through the woods; then they turned sharp to the left and soon found themselves high up-hill above the little army of Dons—about 200 strong, apparently, for they had drawn together and had lit a little fire in order to feed before resuming the battle. For your Don, on the war-path, loves not only his dinner, but as many more meals as he can lay his hands upon.

They were laughing and talking, and in the stillness of the dark night their voices were distinctly audible.

"The hacienda itself," an officer was saying, "will

soon fall now, and then, my braves, our feast and fun will begin in earnest. We shall spare none!"

The speaker was standing.

In the glimmer of light the priest took steady aim and fired, and the officer dropped.

This was the signal for a terrible volley, and, as fast as the men could move their triggers, the terrible repeaters poured death into those dense columns. Then, sword in hand, and with a shout that reëchoed from rock to rock, they charged down on them.

The enemy fled after firing one round, at random, for they saw no one as yet.

The gun was speedily seized and rendered useless.

They poured a farewell volley into the darkness after the Dons, and from their yells it was evident it had taken effect.

But the fire of the enemy had, alas! been sadly effective. Poor Hodson was shot dead through the heart, and one other man wounded in the leg. The doctor hauled the latter toward the light and applied a tourniquet. Then both men were carried back to the hacienda.

As they were leaving the wood they heard several rattling volleys, and knew that the Spaniards were catching it hot from the trenches and trochas.

The fire in the mill continued to burn fiercely, and, as ill-luck would have it, the wind began to change and sparks were now being blown over the hacienda, as thickly as fall the flakes in a snow-storm.

Then up rose the sun and glimmered red through the forest trees in the east.

Hodson was laid on the lawn beneath a splendid crimson-flowered habiscus. He seemed calmly sleeping, and there was on his face what appeared to be a happy smile.

"Poor fellow, poor, brave fellow!" said Adeane, "his sorrows and troubles are all over. It is true he sleeps, but

"He sleeps the sleep that knows no breaking,
Morn of toil nor night of waking.'"

"The fighting is over for a time," said Father McDowney, throwing down his sword. "Let us pray!"

All knelt, and even the darkies from the trenches, with the morning sunshine glancing red from their wet, dark bodies, joined that sad meeting.

There was no gloom in the prayer that the priest prayed, nor in the hymn that followed. But it breathed of hope and trust in the Power that makes the sun to rise, the flowers to bloom and the blue rivers to flow joyfully on to the still bluer sea, just as our lives do drift onward and on, though winding oft, till they reach and mingle with the great ocean of Eternity.

CHAPTER XII

“ ‘ War is War,’ said Weyler. So say I,”
cried Adeane

“ Again to the battle Achaians!
Our hearts bid the tyrants defiance!
Our land, the first garden of Liberty’s Tree
It has been, and shall be, the land of the free.”
—Campbell.

THE worthy Dr. Ramsay did all in his power to save his patient, but—in vain. He had lost a large amount of blood, and though the severed femoral artery had been tied, he rapidly sank and died peacefully, just as the great clock on the hacienda solemnly tolled the hour of ten.

Both men were buried in the grounds.

By this time the shutters on the north side of Adeane’s dear old Cuban home, had become red hot, and presently a spiral jet of smoke rose from the roof. It was evident to all, therefore, that the building itself, like the mill, was doomed.

At great risk to the men, the big catapult and the petroleum bombs were got out, and all portable valuables, for if fortune should favour them, in the event of another attack, and should they be able to repel it, Adeane determined that in the darkness of

the night they would endeavour to make an escape by a northern mountain track, and if possible find their way to the nearest insurgent camp.

By two o'clock, during the very fiercest heat of the day, the hacienda was in a blaze from basement to roof. It was a sad—an awful sight. The windows, despite the shutters, were blown out, one by one, followed by eruptions of rolling clouds of smoke and tongues of fire that followed these skyward, darting hither and thither like fiery swords. And the smoke and sparks were carried far over the green beauty of the southern woods.

Adeane, with his companions and men, were appalled at the ferocity of the flames. Luckily the grounds all around were extensive, else the heat from the burning mansion would have been insupportable.

From a corner of one trench, men were now set to work busily, and in two hours' time they had excavated a cave, propping the roof up with heavy timbers, into which the ladies of the establishment and several female servants could hide from the storm of bullets that sooner or later Adeane knew must sweep through the trocha and across the grounds.

But indeed both Mrs. Adeane and Aileen behaved now with marvelous pluck, and with that calmness and self-possession which is one of the chief attributes of true courage.

On the whole, Adeane's arrangements and the forethought he had displayed from the very com-

mencement would have caused him to be respected as a general and soldier, had the army been his choice in life instead of the speculator's office.

When all was done that could be done, dinner was served in the trenches, and after this, at a suggestion from Father McDowney, the main brace was spliced.

Then came a long and weary wait.

This was worse than anything else, for a busy-minded man would far sooner work or even fight than wait.

“Perhaps, dear,” said Mrs. Adeane to her husband, who sat with Teddy near her in the cool cave. “Perhaps the Spaniards may not return at all.”

“O, wouldn't that be nice, Teddy?” added Aileen, who was seated on her new brother's knee.

“Yes, Aileen; but never mind, let them come; we can fight them and make them fly once more, only you must not scream or be afraid.”

“O, I won't. I love to hear the guns go crack—crack—cricketty-crack, and see the flash. May I not just peep round the corner of the cage when you are fighting, to see the fireworks?”

“No, no, Aileen. Promise me you won't.”

Aileen turned her head a little to one side for a few moments in a considering kind of way. Then she said slowly:

“No, brother; I don't think I'd better promise, because you see one never knows what may happen.”

As the afternoon passed by and the sun began to

decline toward the western hills, there came a minstrel to the mouth of the cave.

It was Father McDowney himself. And he had his fiddle in his hand.

Father McDowney would rather have left his watch and all the money he possessed in the burning hacienda than his dear old Strad.

"By your leave," he said; and Adeane smiled and nodded.

As he turned up the pegs and brought the instrument into tune, he kept talking. "Nero," he said, "played the fiddle when Rome was burning, and everybody blames him for doing so till this day. Sure, I wouldn't be down on Nero for all the world. It was for comfort's sake he fiddled, and now I'm going to fiddle while the most beautiful hacienda in all Cuba is blazing to the blue sky."

At that moment a noise like thunder was heard, and sparks and flames shot upward as if from the mouth of an active volcano.

The roof had fallen in, the hacienda was now but a smouldering ruin!

Just one plaintive and beautiful old Irish song, "The Wearing of the Green," did this kindly honest priest first sing and play. A song it was that brought the tears to even Aileen's eyes, a song that goes to the heart of every Irishman when he hears it played in far-off foreign lands, for dearly do all Celtic nations, whether Irish, Welsh or Scotch, love the land that gave them birth.

But gallant Father McDowney was not content with playing sad airs to his people—songs that melted the heart and brought bonnie Erin and their bygone days, Erin with its smiles and its tears, vividly back before their eyes; so no sooner had the last note of “The Wearing of the Green” melted away in long drawn cadence than he broke into one of the wildest, merriest jigs ever played on a fiddle or listened to at Donnybrook Fair.

There were no more tears, no more moist eyes now.

“Hooch!” cried the priest as he played.

The very fiddle itself gave the Irish “Hooch!”

“Hooch!” shouted Paddy O’Ryan, with a hand in the air. “Bedad! it’s a milestone itself that would dance to that same. Whoop!”

In another moment there were fifteen brave Irishmen dancing just there in the trench to the priest’s glorious music. What cared they for the heat of the day? What cared they, just then, for woes gone past or foes to come. An Irishman laughs in the ranks when marching on to battle and —

“ Moves to death with military glee.”

But when the fun was at its wildest, there mingled with the music the rattle of musketry fire from the bush, and bullets flew over the heads of the dancers and flattened themselves on the ruined walls of the hacienda.

Father McDowney finished the jig, though. Then

he put his "darling," as he called the fiddle, carefully away in her box and picked up his rifle.

The fighting now began in deadly earnest, but so well were Adeane's men protected, that it was only while delivering a volley with heads slightly raised above the trench that the Spaniards had a chance. They were all too successful, for one black man was shot through the head and two wounded.

The firing was kept up thus for nearly an hour, and no doubt that from the trenches did good service, but it was difficult to see the enemy, so hidden were they among the trees.

And, save for the constant rattle of their rifles, their numbers could not be guessed at.

The doctor proposed a sortie sword in hand, but Captain Adeane only shook his head.

"We could clear them out of there, though," he added, "and fire the bush by means of a petroleum bomb or two."

"I'll work the catapult," cried the warlike priest.

"*I* will, and not you," said the doctor.

"*I* had the word before you, doctor dear."

"It is a work of great danger, forlorn hope, indeed, and I fear to lose either of you." This from Adeane.

Father McDowney crossed himself and his lips seemed to move in prayer. Then waiting for the ring of the enemy's next volley and the whizzing, *pinging* sound of the bullets overhead, he ran along the trench and leapt nimbly up.

The catapult was quickly but quietly hauled out from under its protecting bushes and carefully loaded.

Then the brave fellow took careful, steady aim. Not a bit of hurry did he seem to be in, though bullets flew past him like hail. The brim of his broad hat and even his jacket sleeve were pierced, but he himself—the hero—stood intact. He seemed God-protected.

The bomb leaves the catapult. Slowly it flies, but it gets there all the same. Next moment there is a roar like thunder. Bright are the beams of the sun, but the red tongues of fire can be seen darting in all directions, and the grass and bush catch fire.

There is a yell of pain and agony as fifty men run staggering and tumbling from their cover. The priest heads them off with another bomb, and at the same moment a well-aimed volley is poured into their ranks from the trench and more men reel and stumble, falling dead or wounded in the open.

One more bomb to the south, and back comes Father McDowney, laughing.

"I've brought out my bat," he says, with a broad grin. He is received by loud cheers, as he coolly picks up his rifle and looks at the breech.

"Run round to that corner, Teddy," cries Adeane, now, "and watch the enemy. Don't get shot, boy, but there is a portion of the defending trocha very weak at the other side. They are sure to discover it. Are you listening?"

"Yes, Captain Adeane. I'm taking in every word you say."

"Well, I shall stand by this post, and when the enemy are as thick at that portion of the trocha as a cluster of bees, signal to me."

Teddy was off on his mission in a moment, and after a time, which seemed to those in the trenches to be interminable, he raised his hand as a signal.

Captain Adeane touched a button.

A roar like that from an active volcano shook the very ground on which they stood.

Every eye was turned in the direction whence the awful sound had proceeded.

Even Aileen could stand it no more and rushed from the cave to cling to her father's arm.

A mine had been sprung, while fully forty men were over it, and with fearful results. A great ball of black smoke was yonder, but straight into the air, and through its centre were shot lines of earth and stones and fire, with shattered limbs and bodies of men.

In the débris thus raised, Teddy McCoy stood staggered and aghast to see a severed arm—nothing attached to it, but still clutching its Mauser rifle.

This may seem awful, but it is nevertheless true. Captain Adeane's brows were knit, and there was a mingled look of sternness and sorrow on his face.

"'War is war,' said Weyler, and so say I," he cried.

"Poor devils," muttered the priest, "but their

sorrows are over, and they'll never know what hurt them.”

There was now a long lull in the battle. For the Spaniards had retreated back south and into the bush.

“ Perhaps they're going to dine,” said the doctor, laughing.

“ Very likely,” said Adeane. “ That is just their way.”

But one disagreeable fact remained. The explosion of the mine had torn down the defences and almost bridged over that particular portion of the trench. Should the enemy now return in full strength an easy triumph would be theirs.

Adeane's good fellows would fight to the death, but against great numbers they were bound soon to disappear.

And massacre would follow.

There was no time to repair damages or re-fortify, so Adeane did the next best thing, he brought up his forces close to the gap, and the catapult was once more drawn forward and hidden behind a bush just facing the gap.

Many an anxious look did Adeane now take at the slowly declining sun and the lengthening shadows of the trees.

“ O, if night and darkness would only come,” he said more than once, “ that we might escape ! ”

“ We are in good hands,” said Father McDowney, consolingly. “ Are we not ? ”

"I know it. I know it," replied Captain Adeane. "It is not for myself I care. We are men, father, and can meet death, yet never blanch, but my wife and daughter. Ah! McDowney, were they only out of danger, how much more bravely I should proceed to defend that gap. Besides ——"

Adeane never concluded that sentence.

"Hark!" cried Teddy. "Hark! sir. Don't you hear it?"

"I hear a strange, confused noise. The attack is about to commence."

"We are ready, Ted," he added. "And now 'tis *do or die!*"

"But, sir, it is possible my hearing is better than yours. That is no advance of the foe. Hark! again, sir. You hear that wild shout?"

"I hear it. I hear it."

"The insurgents are coming to our aid. They have attacked and will soon rout the cowardly soldiers of Spain. O sir, aren't you happy now?"

"Ay, ay," cried Adeane, joyfully, "and may heaven give strength to their arms!"

"Run, Aileen, dear,"—for the child still stood in the trench—"run and tell mother that our friends are not far off and may soon be here. Run, run."

Aileen needed no second bidding.

Meanwhile, mingling with the shouting far down in the bush could now be heard the sharp ringing of revolver shots and anon the clashing of swords.

That a battle was going on was evident, and it

could only be betwixt the insurgents and the Spaniards.

Who would win?

Much would undoubtedly depend upon the comparative number of men in each faction. Victory, however, would not necessarily lean toward the side of the strongest force if these were the tattered demalion soldiers of the enemy. Whether on foot or astride of their hardy and active horses a Cuban considered himself the equal of two if not three Dons.

Ah! readers, in warfare, just as at football, there is nothing like having a good opinion of one's own prowess. No use feeling your muscles or looking at your legs. If you are fit, and are happy, the nerve that is in you and which carries the vital energy directly from the brain and spinal cord will lead you through. I have seen men do marvels—thin, wiry men with but little muscle—both on the battlefield and on the grass. And the Cubans were just such men. Not an ounce of extra and useless fat. Poor fellows, they did not get enough food to fatten a cat. But they had indomitable will, they were fighting for their wives and families, or their sisters and sweethearts, and the hatred they had for the foe was only equalled by the love they bore for the beautiful land that had given them birth.

The battle down yonder raged loud and long, and Adeane was undecided as to whether or not he

should go with a portion of his little garrison to the aid of his friends.

Suddenly, however, the war cries and shouting became hoarser and higher.

One side was winning.

"It must be the insurgents!" cried Ted. "Those wild slogans could never come from the pipey throats of the Dons."

Then the sounds went farther and farther off and finally died slowly away in the distance.

Our friends in the fort waited and waited a weary time.

The sun was apparently within a yard of the distant wooded hilltops.

"Listen!" cried Teddy once more. "Don't you hear it now, Father McDowney?"

"Yes, yes," was the quick reply. "'Tis music; the roll of the drum, the sweet notes of the flageolet. A pæan of victory!"

This gallant priest who could stand so calmly and so coolly at the great catapult, while bullets sang around him, was excited now, nervously, intensely so.

"The victory is ours," he cried. "We are saved!"

He caught little Aileen up and kissed her. He shook hands with Adeane, with the doctor, with Ted, and would you believe it, the tears were streaming over the honest fellow's face.

And just as the first horsemen came cantering into the clearing below, a shout arose from the

hacienda-fort that startled the very birds from the trees.

Ay, and it was reëchoed, you may safely say, from the throats of those war-worn soldiers and heroes.

Through the gateway they poured now, past the scene of the mine explosion with its ghastly comminglement of torn and shattered corpses.

In they poured, in and in.

And the first soldier to dismount—ragged in coat was he and hatless, his face covered with dust, and blood on his jacket sleeve—ran at once to the spot where Mrs. Adeane and little Aileen stood transfixed.

“ Darlings, don’t you know me ? ” he cried.

Next moment Desmond had thrown himself into his mother’s arms, while Aileen hugged his hand and wept.

THE END OF BOOK I.

BOOK II

America to the Rescue

“Once more into the breach, once more ;
Or close the wall up with our dead !
In peace there is nothing so becomes a man
As modest stillness and humility.
But when the blast of war blows in our ears
Then imitate the action of the tiger ;
Stiffen the sinews—and summon up the blood.”

—*Shakespeare.*

CHAPTER I

The Eagle Swoops Down from His Eyrie

“ But Linden showed another sight,
When drums beat at the dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of the scenery.”

“ Cry ‘Havoc!’ and let slip the dogs of war.”

HAD you been walking alone on the seabeach of Key West on that eventful night—April 21st, 1898,—scarcely might you have been able to suppress a little shudder as you glanced around you, or seaward.

About six by the clock, or four bells by the men-o’-war that lay at anchor in the harbour, and the sun had sunk—a deep saturnine red—behind the waves.

A scimitar of a moon hopeful and bright there had been. It had cast, however, but a few glances athwart the gloom, then disappeared, and the stars though clear enough, were mostly hidden by fleecellets of cloud.

Across the sea, you would have noted the black smooth backs of great heaving waves, that anon broke lazily on the shore just near you. Farther

out a long strip of snow-white water marking a dangerous coral reef. And far beyond this, twinkling lights that might easily have been mistaken for stars burning low on the horizon. They were in reality the lamps gleaming at the mast-heads of the American Flagship New York and her splendid consorts, the battle-ships Iowa and Indiana.

A still, solemn, somewhat dismal night, but turning townward, you breathe more freely when you stand in the wide and busy streets.

Well lighted are they everywhere, and though the houses are built of wood, their windows to-night make a lively show.

Here displayed is everything likely to tempt our bold sailor Jackie to part with his dollars. Jackie is in great evidence.

He hitches up his wide-legged trowsers as he walks along the broad pavement singing merrily if not loudly to himself, or stops a moment in front of a stall or store, wondering what he might buy and send home to his own best girl living far away.

Jackie is yonder too in the street cars, by the half-dozen, for you don't find Jackie walking a long distance if he can ride.

But hark! a wild and joyful shout from the street, repeated again and again till the welkin rings or glasses jingle on the shelves, which is much about the same.

Have the goods folks of Key West all taken sudden leave of their seven senses? Americans,

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Britishers should remember, have seven senses each, or—avast ! isn't it seventeen ?

Jackie hasn't long to wait and wonder.

In bursts a portion of the crew of a boat from the flagship.

"Turn out, my boys. Turn out, men. War is declared !"

"Kiss your girls good-bye and march !"

"Just one more dance," cries Jackie, "Hurrah ! Hurrah !"

A little sentiment on the part of the girls, a few foolish tears and Jackie is gone.

Swift, I think it was, who said :

" that every creature
Lives in a state of war by nature."

Swift or Hobbes, or whoever made this remark, was probably right.

Anyhow I do know, that nothing in this world, in any country I am acquainted with, causes half the stir that, in towns and cities, the departure of troops, blue-jackets or marines does.

On the declaration of war with Spain, America went mad, apparently. When volunteers poured in, and when the brave fellows marched up the crowded streets for embarkation, America went madder. Such shouting, such screaming, such waving of tear-bedewed handkerchiefs from every window along the route, had never been witnessed before, since the early sixties. But civilians, both

men and women, invaded and broke the ranks that they might shake hands with the lads, bless them and bid them good speed ; blessing, ay and kissing too. The prettier girls did the kissing and even their sweethearts, who were to stay at home—perhaps promising to go to the war later on—had not the heart to object to this promiscuous osculation.

By one o'clock in the morning the city of Key West had calmed down very considerably. But all night long it was busy, busy times in the harbour, where the bulk of the noble North Atlantic squadron was lying.

The name Key West is given to a string of small islands lying about sixty miles to the south of Florida. The city which is also the capital of county Munro is built on the largest island, which however is not more than seven miles long by two or three miles broad. The island is beautiful, though there being no hills at all of any kind its beauties are like those of England—which in contradistinction to Scotland—Lord Gordon Byron, that true Scot and bard, describes as tame and domestic.

“England thy beauties are tame and domestic
To one who has roamed on the mountains afar !
Oh ! for the crags that are wild and majestic
The deep frowning glories of dark Loch-na-garr.”

But, although this flowery isle of the ocean is almost a dead level, it has been formed by coral and used even as a health resort. Turtles are ex-

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ported hence for lands far north and east, also sponges, with fruit and vegetables and good cigars galore.

A fort frowns over the entrance to the harbour, but what its fighting capabilities may or may not be, I really cannot say. The words Key West are simply a corruption of the Spanish *Cayo Hueso*, the "rock of bones." Right well named thus, for on dark and stormy nights, many and many a good ship has struck on the reefs around it, and now down on the white, white coral or among the lovely living flowers in the sub-ocean gardens, sailors' bones lie bleaching.

Before following the fleet, let us take a shore boat and shove off to a beautiful and sturdy yacht, that is lying at anchor yonder in Key West harbour.

Why it is our old friend the Bonito, and here, just come up from breakfast, and walking steadily up and down her ivory-white quarter-deck, over which the awning is still spread, is Captain Adeane himself, with our brave and gallant Father McDowney. By and by, Aileen and her mother come up and sink into deck-chairs to read or to imagine they are reading. Walking solemnly behind is Charlie Chat, Cheese seated on his back and purring aloud.

Very pretty, indeed, does Aileen look to-day in her white gauzy frock, with bodice of green and dainty straw hat. She has a book, but I cannot be-

lieve she is reading very much, so frequently do her eyes wander westward and away over the sea. For Desmond has sailed to-day in the flagship—his father having easily obtained a cadetship for him.

Aileen thinks of him, but she thinks a little also of Teddy, the poor Irish boy, as he called himself, as often, or nearly as often.

He, too, had gone to join the service, but simply in the capacity of an able-bodied seaman, with Commodore Schley, one of the pluckiest and cleverest officers in any American squadron.

Teddy's abilities were of no mean order. He was a capital clerk and good writer of shorthand, and Adeane could have placed this young business man of his in a much higher position. The lad's reply to this proposal was simple enough, but effective.

"I shouldn't care at all, at all," he said, "to be in the purser's department. I want to see some fighting. It will be a rest to me!"

"It is a pity," Mrs. Adeane had remarked in her motherly way, "that the two boys can't be together."

But as we see, fate has decided it otherwise.

That was almost an ocean race southward to Havana from Key West. This city, a glance at the map will show the reader, lies on the north side of Cuba, having on the west shore Antonio and westward still the large district of Pinar del Rio, already mentioned in this "ower true tale." Many miles to the east of Havana, is the city of Matanzas, a well

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fortified place and one of great importance commercially. Its population is about 100,000, all told. Then comes Cardenas. The island of Cuba is altogether nearly 800 miles in length, and of various widths, from say fifty to eighty or 100 miles. As long as the map is in our hands, it may be well to take a glance at its southern shores.

We note here Cienfuegos—(pronounce Thee-en-foo-ay-gos)—also an important town of about 70,000 souls. It is connected with Havana by rail, a journey of 160 miles. On this line during the war ran the ironclad railway carriages with loopholed shutters, filled with armed men ready and willing to give a good account of the insurgents if they tried to wreck or derail the train.

In the Caribbean Sea we notice the Isle of Pines, where the Bonito lay until rejoined by Adeane and his people after their escape from the ruined plantation and hacienda.

But Santiago (pronounce *San-tee-ah-go*) and the district around it, are now as they have been in the first book of this story, our chief seat of interest. For here the bravest deeds in this sad war were done, as we shall presently see.

* * * * *

The Americans are a hospitable, kind and tender-hearted people. To this fact I can give my personal testimony. They are, moreover, sympathetic to a degree. How could it be otherwise? Are they not our own people? Our own cousins at all events.

And could they have been expected to look calmly on forever at the horrors, the cruelties, the massacres that were being enacted at their very gates by a brutal nation upon a gentle, humble people, whose only wish was to cultivate their fields in peace and freedom.

I have already described many of these nightmare terrors. But listen while I make an extract or two from Davis and Morris. When the fiend Weyler put in force his painfully ridiculous reconcentration decree against the toilers of the country, non-combatants or pacificos, only eight days were given to them to come into the fortified places, leaving their homes to be burnt and laid waste by prowling Spanish troops. If they did not come within this specified time, they were to be shot on sight.

For the "accommodation" of these unfortunates, the most low-lying and swampy grounds in the immediate vicinity of towns were selected.

'Twixt Havana and Matanzas on the north is a town called Jaruco. In this "the filth lay ankle-deep in streets and plaza and found its way into the church occupied as a barrack. The pacificos had closely-built rows of huts holding from four to ten persons each, while ten feet away were the cavalry barracks, men and horses in a dangerous state of uncleanness. . . . Smallpox swept like a consuming fire through huts and barracks alike. Decency of any kind was out of the question. Utter

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dejection or hopelessness was the aspect of the pacificos. Gaunt, hollow-eyed, half-clad in rags, they sat listless, too regardless of anything on earth, even to lift their eyes if money or food were given them. Babies there were covered with sores and with the skin drawn so tightly over their little bodies, that the bones showed through as plainly as rings worn under a glove. . . . The scarcity of food increased and with it the death-rate. . . . The unfortunates were for the most part women and children or aged and helpless men, enfeebled by disease and hunger, and could not have tilled the soil without tools, seed or shelter to provide for their own support or for the supply of the cities."

Was it any wonder that, knowing such misery and cruelties far worse than these were taking place just outside her gates, America advised Spain, counselled her, remonstrated with her and finally declared war against the land.

There have been British papers that have openly hinted that the great republic merely meant to make war for the sake of aggrandisement.

This is false; as false as the Father of Lies himself.

It was in the month of March that a company of men from Congress paid a visit to Cuba, hoping against hope that things might be just a little better than they had been reported.

Alas! they found matters worse than they had expected. They saw with their own eyes the sad

and hopeless condition of the wretched reconcentrados, dying of starvation and loathsome disease, around the towns, where they had been *not* lodged but positively *ditched* among reeking filth and slime, unburied bodies of children and babies sweltering in the sun or being devoured by hungry dogs

“ With more of fearful and awful
That e’en to name would be unlawful ! ”

The tale they told on their return, in plain, quiet and simple language, roused the anger of our American cousins to fever heat, and they shouted aloud for intervention and for war.

Then had come the last and final act of Spain’s madness ; the destruction of the United States man-o’-war ship, *Maine*, in Havana harbour.

This it was which lit at last the fires of battle and of death.

CHAPTER II

A Dark Night's Work

“And pity, like a naked newborn babe
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.”—*Shakespeare.*

THE United States North Atlantic squadron, under cool and daring Commodore Sampson, sailed, as we have seen, early on the morning of April 22d, to blockade Havana and to make it just as warm for the Spaniards, all around Cuba and *in* it, as they knew how to.

Let us leave them ploughing their way through the clear waters of the bright blue sea, while we hark back a few weeks and learn the story of the *Maine*; the destruction of that good old ship, being without doubt, the last straw that led to the breaking of the elephant's back—the elephant on this occasion being as the Irish soldier said, “durty little Spain.”

It used to be the double-faced and positive childishness of the Spaniards, that the people of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, while reading the daily newspapers, scorned and hated. For these

Dons, fools themselves, evidently thought they could "draw the winkers" over the eyes of others.

The government of Spain, early in the year of 1898, innocently—O ever so innocently! and with such charming naïveté, informed the Americans that they would be doing a good thing and a charitable one if they contributed to the relief and improvement of poor Cuba—the Cuba, mind, that they themselves were doing all in their power to remove off the face of the earth. The money they said—a mere detail—might be sent to the American consuls and distributed by them to the starving Cubans.

But the Yankees are astute. They can generally see as far through a millstone as the miller himself, so they took no notice of this two-faced and insolent request.

In the middle of January, owing to this proposal of the Spaniards, a terrible riot ensued in Havana, in which town, hatred of the Americans had long been festering and bubbling like a plague pit.

But the United States government dispatched troops to protect their consulate.

It was evident enough now that the Spaniards were secretly preparing for war. This was a game that two could play at, though America did not hide cards up her sleeve. She openly sent the North Atlantic squadron to anchor at Key West and islands adjacent thereto. This was on the 20th of January, 1898, and as war was not declared till just three months after this, one may guess what a

long, irksome and weary time of it Jackie Tar and his officers had.

To us, the ships themselves, seemed weary, and as they swung with the tide, "titted" and tugged at their anchors, rising and pulling on the heaving seas, in the most impatient manner.

"Let us free, let us free," they seemed to cry. "Our coals are on board, our guns are ready to load, our men are burning for action. Let us free and we'll raise a storm on the blue ocean, the thunders of which will shake the rotten old throne of Spain to its very foundation."

It was on the twenty-fifth, that the oldest battle-ship in the American navy—the unfortunate Maine was ordered to Havana.

The Spaniards didn't like it.

"What is this for I wonder?" asked one officer in high quarters.

"That question is easily answered," another said, with a sneer. "She comes here as the thin end of the 'wedge.'"

"May she rot where she lies!" said the former speaker.

"Or be blown to dust, general!"

The general made no reply. He frowned a little but smiled a devil's smile.

And the Spaniards tried now to win over the affections of the better class of Cubans in Havana.

A Spaniard is hard to beat when it comes to genuine blarney.

"The Americans are our common foe," they said, insinuatingly. "Let bygones be bygones. Use your influence to arouse real patriotism in your confrères, the insurgents, else America will enslave the whole island. *We* will make concessions, the Yankees will only use the sword!"

I am sorry to say that they got too many to believe them—in Havana that is.

But not all.

For, not long after the arrival of the doomed Maine, a letter from the representative of Spain in Washington was addressed to an officer at Havana, who had been sent by the Spanish home government to enquire into the "true state of affairs,"—just as if a Don would give anything, save a garbled account, favourable to his country and his country's generals, but damnatory to the bleeding Cubans.

This, however, had never reached the Señor Canalejas. It was stolen by a Cuban, and found its way into the American press. The original letter, which was photographed for the newspapers, now lies in the archives at Washington. In it this double-faced Don, the writer, described President McKinley as a guttersnipe politician and low man, only catering for the rabble.

The storm of rage raised in the breasts of the Yankees was so great that had they got hold of this Enrique de Lome fellow, it is just as likely as not that they would have hanged him over a bridge.

But he handed in his resignation and left America in great haste.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE MAINE

That sad night of the fifteenth of February will never be forgotten in Cuba.

Conspirators and murderers usually prefer darkness in which to commit some awful deed, and this night was certainly to their taste. Nor did they wait until midnight. For at that hour the silence would be even greater than it was about ten, and a better watch would be kept on board. At the time that the mine or torpedo was exploded, the lamps on the streets gave but an uncertain light, which scarce could penetrate the blackness around them. The harbour front was almost deserted. For no one expected that anything unusual was about to occur. But merchant-boats glided to and fro and men towed somewhat unsteadily off to their ships, singing recklessly and loudly, as merchant sailors do.

Ten o'clock, therefore, or some minutes before, was a well-chosen time for the carrying out of a cruel and dastardly project.

The crew of the Maine—bar those on watch—had turned in and were sleeping innocently enough in their bunks, for the orders were that they should not linger after dark about the saloons or wine shops of Cuba, for fear of a riot that would certainly end in bloodshed. Like the British tar, the American Jackie much prefers to use his fists in-

stead of a knife, when he gets into a row. The Don is different.

Captain Sigsbee, of the *Maine*, was also in his bunk, and his commander, Wainwright, was seated in his own cabin, in a little rocker, calmly enjoying a whiff.

He was probably thinking of home and the dear ones far away, at the very moment that a terrible explosion occurred with a kind of quadruple rolling, roaring sound, that lifted his chair from the deck, threw him on the floor and plunged him into darkness cimerian.

He was unhurt, but quite sensible that something terrible had happened!

His first thoughts flew to the magazines forward, where he knew that about six tons of gunpowder were stowed. "That must have exploded," he said to himself.

Meanwhile where were the matches? He groped aimlessly about and finally found them on the deck.

He speedily lit his candle-in-jumbles, and hurried aft to the captain's quarters.

Sigsbee was safe, although the explosion had hurled him from his cot.

An eyewitness, who was near the harbour at the time and gazing toward the harbour lights, says that when he heard the awful earth-shaking roar, his eyes, though he had been thrown down, were turned upon the *Maine*. He saw an immense burst of flame, shaped, he said, like a gigantic shuttle-cock, dart

skyward from the doomed man-o'-war and right from the centre of a circular cloud of white smoke. And in that flame, he assured me—though this might have been imagination—he could see not only torn and riven planks and ravelled cordage, but the mangled limbs and trunks of men.

Every electric light was extinguished all around this man, poles thrown down in all directions, and the city—as if by an earthquake—shaken to its very foundations. The glass in the windows being not only broken, but, as he afterward found out, reduced in many instances to powder.

A moment of awful silence, then words evidently shouted through the megaphone¹ fell on his ear:

“Forward—there if anyone is alive—flood the magazines.”

It is certain, at all events, that whether I can credit my informant or not, some such words were actually used by Commander Wainwright, but alas! the brave fellows who flew to do his bidding perished.

The magazines might have been already flooded by the rapid inpouring of the water after the explosion of the mine.

Be this as it may, certain it is that the Maine was blown up by enemies. Certain it is that she took

¹ An instrument probably first used in this sad war, which has now quite superseded the speaking trumpet. It increases the sound of the human voice twenty-fold, and may be heard above the roar of battle itself.—G. S.

fire almost at once, or rather the floating remains of her, and that despite the assistance afforded by ships at hand, including even Spanish vessels and the American City of Washington, out of a brave ship's company of 350, only forty-eight escaped alive or uninjured.

I cannot help admiring the coolness of Captain Sigsbee on this fearful occasion. His mind was neither influenced by excitement nor anger.

His suspicions of foul play he kept to himself, and after leaving the wreck he ordered the launch that carried him to be laid alongside the Spanish Alphonso XII., and going on board he saluted first the deck or flag, and then the captain and officers, who were together on the quarter-deck, for their kindness in assisting to save the lives of his unfortunate crew.

Nor in the cablegram, which he forwarded soon after to the American president, did he impute a word of blame to the Dons.

That 'gram was worded as coolly as if it had been the description of the most ordinary event, a thunderstorm or slight shock of earthquake. It ran as follows:

"Maine blown up to-night in harbour here at ninety—Destroyed. Many wounded. Doubtless more killed or drowned. . . . Send tenders from Key West for few pieces of equipment still above water. None had clothing except what he wore. Suspend public opinion till further report. All officers be-

lieved to be saved. Many Spanish officers with me to express sympathy."

That was about all the information President McKinley received at three o'clock that morning. It may be presumed that he slept but little after that.

But in the very last sentence of Sigsbee's historical "wire" is there not perceivable just the slightest little bit of irony?

The sympathy was of about as much value and just as sincere as that cabled by the queen of Spain herself or that from the Spanish Parliament.

But proofs were not wanting and had soon come to light that the awful disaster was due to the explosion of a mine by Spanish hands.

Is it any wonder then that one of the battle-cries of the brave Jackie Tars and marines, who manned yonder fleet now speeding through the ocean on her way to Havana would be:

REMEMBER THE MAINE!

CHAPTER III

*“ Heigho ! I shall dream about all this
to-night ”*

The same old middies, brimful of fun,
As fought in the old-time wars,
Quarter-deck officers just the same,
The same brave Jackie Tars.

But how changed are his ships and everything here !

ALTHOUGH the people of the United States, people-like, had leapt at once to the fiery conclusion that the Dons had been virtually, even literally, at the bottom of the Maine business, and called aloud for retribution and vengeance, those in authority very rightly held a court of enquiry. This sat a long time, and most carefully considered the opinions of the divers who were sent below to investigate. These had done their duty in a most manly and thorough manner, and the verdict of the court, at last, was as follows :

“The loss of the Maine was not, in any respect, due to fault or negligence on the part of any of the officers or men of the crew. The ship was destroyed by the explosion of a submarine mine, which caused

the partial exploding of two or more of the forward magazines, etc., etc."

* * * * *

The war had commenced then, with the sailing of Sampson's fleet from Key West.

Who should win?

Surely it was a foregone conclusion that if there be a God of Battle at all, He would lean to that side which had entered upon the struggle with clean hands and hearts,—yet so reluctantly—rather than to that whose hands were red and reeking with the blood of innocent babes and women, and whose hearts were stained with murder vile.

Such thoughts as these crossed Desmond's mind as his ship went dashing through the waves. She left no ordinary wake behind her, nor did her consorts in the race. No wake that had any resemblance to that of an old-fashioned man-o'-war, or later ironclad; but a broad, foaming, churned-up band of white, that turned not blue till the vessel left it miles ahead. And the water from the bows rose like two walls, higher and more curling than any breaker that ever thundered on a beach after a wild storm far out at sea.

Desmond had been on board the New York for many weeks, and had already made friends with the officers, not only senior, but junior—his mess-mates—as well.

The young fellow was so thoroughly enthusiastic,

and his clear, blue, fearless eyes told even the admiral that Dess was a hero at heart.

The ships of navies, both British and American, are changed, it is true. Jackie Tar, however, as I have already said, is just the same, and your mid-dies are not altered one little bit. Quite as fond of pranks, quite as fond of fun and skylarking as in the brave days of old.

If you but heard them of a night singing ranting songs in their mess-room, and knocking on the tables to make the ranting, rattling choruses more effective; or chaffing each other in their glee, but out of no bad feeling; or spinning impossible yarns; or pretending to get very tight on harmless mulled claret—a tightness which vanished

“ . . . like the lofty golden clouds
That float on the mountain brow ”

the moment the watch was called you would understand the truth of what I say.

Naturally enough Desmond came in for a good sprinkling of chaff. It didn't go more than feather-deep, however, and Dess ranted and sang with the best of them, and told some wonderful stories also, which before he commenced he begged of the boys not to believe.

“But tell us some of your wild adventures in Cuba,” said an ensign, one evening.

Desmond's face grew serious at once.

“No, Taylor, no,” he replied. “I should be sorry

to sadden you. I'll sing a song and I'll spin a yarn that shall run Munchausen up a lane, but I'm not going to tell the truth."

Only just on one occasion had Desmond lost his temper in the mess.

It was an evening shortly after he had joined and when the chaff was at its hottest.

"Well, anyhow," said a middy or ensign, "we won't have you figuring off as an American. Yours is the green flag of old Ireland, Desmond."

"I love old Ireland," said Desmond, calmly. "But my father is a naturalised subject of the United States, and I was born under the rippling shadow of the stars and stripes!"

As he spoke, he rose slowly from the table, shoving aside his plate of fruit. Then, just as calmly, he took off his jacket and waistcoat. He folded both up and placed them on a chair with his cap on top. He ruffled his fingers through his hair to clear his brow.

"Why, what is the matter, Mr. Adeane?" said the young president of the mess, assuming a look of authority.

"The matter with me, sir, is this: Ensign Beaver there has grossly insulted me. I shall trouble him to come outside for a few minutes. I want an interview——"

Beaver turned pale, but he sprang up with hands clenched and looking determined.

"No, no, no," cried several members of the mess.

The president smiled.

"I cannot," he said, "allow the peace of this little community to be disturbed. Mr. Beaver, sir, you have hurt Adeane's feelings. Your language was really insulting. I do not command you, but I request you to make our friend an ample apology."

Beaver played with the orange pips on his plate for just a few seconds, then he laughed jollily.

"'Pon my word," he said, "I've been most beastly rude, and I don't doubt for a single moment that Adeane could give me the sound thrashing I really deserve. I ask his forgiveness!"

He advanced to the spot and he and Adeane heartily shook hands, and were friends forever after.

"America yet!" cried one.

"Hurrah! for America. Hurrah!"

Then Yankee Doodle was sung by all hands, with much drumming with fists upon the table. So much patriotic commotion, indeed, was exhibited, that presently the master-at-arms appeared, "with the compliments of the officer of his watch to the young gentlemen and would they kindly make just a trifle less noise."

"Most certainly," replied the president, smiling. Present my compliments to the officer of the watch, and tell him that I shall at once give orders to the youngsters that will result in—in—a—in a reduction of their jollity."

Bowing and laughing, Sangster retired.

The president, who was not much more than a boy himself, now turned smiling to his messmates and said, "That's Jimmy Legs, you know, lads. Heard the droll poet Barnes' last on the master-at-arms?"

"No, no. Let us hear it."

"Well, I will, though I'm no great gun at reciting."

"BRASS-BOUND"¹

"Oh! Jimmy Legs, he walks the deck,
Brass buttons down his coat,
A buzzard and stripe he wears on his sleeve,
He's the biggest man afloat;
The lads who smuggle the stuff on board,
They know when he's around,
And skylarkin' drops and the fightin' stops,
Because he is brass-bound.

"Oh! Johnny Marine, he shoulders arms,
And he won't get out of your way,
And he wears white gloves at the cabin-door,
And thinks he's the deuce-to-pay;
He *may* talk back to Turret Jack,
But, he's as meek ever you found,
If you come along with a stripe and a bird,
And happen to be brass-bound.

"And it's oh! and I'm goin' to be brass-bound
Before I leaves the ship;
I'm goin' to sport a bird of my own,
And I won't take nobody's tip.

¹I, Gordon Stables, of the British Royal Navy, do confess, without a blush, that I prigged this song from the American press.

I ain't ashamed of a shirt
 (And I wears a ratin' mark),
 But I makes up my mind as a 'prentice boy
 (When walkin' in Central Park),
 I was goin' to *be* brass-bound
 Afore I left the sea;
 And a buzzard and stripe
 And a bo'sain's pipe,
 Are waitin' somewheres for me."

"Bravo, Barnes! and bravo, you, sir! Mr. President, your health and song!"

"And now," said this officer, "I call upon Mr. Adeane for a song. Not too loud, and with no chorus, for orders must be obeyed, and discipline must be maintained as suggested to us by the officer of the watch, *per* Jimmy Legs."

"I'm on the boards," said Desmond. "But, gentlemen, have any of you got a sweetheart?"

A loud laugh.

"I have *one*," said the president, modestly.

"And I have *three*," cried a middy who shaved.

"Fiddlesticks, man," cried another, "I have one wherever I go. Fall 'regularly in love at every ball,' and keep true to my love as the needle to the pole, till——"

"Till the next ball. Eh, Dumpling?"

"That's about it," admitted Dumpling.

"Well," said Desmond, "I'm content with just one little one. It is like this. In a scrimmage with the Dons, worse than football—Scotch rules, I got rolled over with a Mauser. I was taken in

charge by a dear, sweet old lady who lived in a lovely hacienda hidden away among the hills. Her daughter was a good fairy—nothing else, gentlemen. O, the dear, tender-hearted girl, how I do love her! Think me silly and sentimental, eh?"

"No, no, heave round!"

"Well, some day I'm going to marry her. But I'll sing you the song I sang to her the evening before I left to join again our cavalry and help to relieve my father's fort.

"It's a Scotch song, but you won't mind. It is so sweet!"

"And I'll accompany you on the flute," said a young fellow.

"Good!"

And Desmond sang as follows:

THE PAIRTIN'¹ (Parting.)

VERSE I.—

"Mary, dearest maid, I leave thee,
Hame, an' frien's, an' country dear;
Oh! ne'er let our pairtin' grieve thee,
Happier days may soon be here.

¹ This truly charming song is to be found in a collection of the best songs of Scotland—"The Lyric Gems"—so few of which are known in England, and beneath it the following words, the truth of which I so often experience:

"CHEERFULNESS—AND SONG.—If you would keep spring in your hearts, learn to sing. There is more merit in melody than most people are aware of. A cobbler who smoothes his wax-ends with a song, will do as much work in a day, as one given to ill-nature would do in a week. Songs are like sunshine, they run to cheerfulness to fill the bosom with such buoyancy that, for the time being, you feel filled with June air, or like a meadow of clover in blossom."

See yon bark sae proudly bounding,
 Soon shall bear me o'er the sea;
 Hark! the trumpet loudly sounding,
 Calls me far frae love an' thee.

VERSE II.—

“Summer flowers shall cease to blossom,
 Streams run backward fae the sea;
 Cauld in death maun be this bosom,
 Ere it cease to throb for thee.
 Fare thee weel—may ev'ry blessin'
 Shed by Heav'n around the fa';
 Ae last time thy lov'd form pressin'—
 Think o' me when far awa'.”

* * * * *

Yes, on the whole, the gun-room mess, as it is called still on many Britishers, was a very happy one.

But, at first, everything on board from keel to tops was strange and new to our young hero. Many an old-fashioned ship of both Britain and America had he boarded, and for months after joining the New York he harped back upon these in his own mind. There was more romance about them, he told his messmates.

And I, myself, feel for the lad. I am nothing earthly, if not a sailor. If not a sailor I want just to “lay me doon and dee,” as the lover was willing to do for bonnie Annie Laurie.

I am not going to call our brave armoured cruisers mere “tin kettles,” nor designate her officers and men as engineers and greasers, nor her stokers and

fellows who work below in the breathless air as the "Black Gang," still, as to romance, and there must be a little of that in ships and sailors, they are no more to be compared to a vessel under sail—maybe with stunsails set aloft and aloft—than a railway coal tender can be to a well-tooled coach and four.

But Desmond was literally taken aback, like a brig in a squall, at the wonders he saw here, all around him.

"Oh!" he cried to one of the older "men" of his mess, "I shall never learn to work a craft of this kind. I'm dazed—I'm puzzled,—I don't feel perfectly sure that I'm not standing on my head."

His messmate laughed.

"I was the same, once," he said. "For you see, here, everything is worked by machinery, electrical or steam."

"Well," said poor Dess, "I don't see. But just fire away, all the same. I never could understand Browning nor Wagner, and this is Browning, Wagner and Chaucer all rolled into one and about as much mixed up as the barbed wires in a Spanish trocha."

"Well," said the midgy, whose name was Gray, "I suppose you know more about trochas than I do. Until I came to Key West I always thought a trocha was a kind of cough drop. Then I looked up an old Spanish dictionary and found that trocha was a narrow pathway."

Desmond laughed.

"Why," he said, "you wouldn't find it an easy one to walk along. Charlie Chat, our bulldog, got mixed up in one once, and he might just as well have been in a spider's web. His skin was torn in all directions with his struggle to get free, and it took me half an hour to get the dear old fellow clear. I did so just as Spanish bullets began to sing and ping around us. I mounted my steed with Charlie in front, and didn't we fly, just! Young Lochinvar, who came out of the west, you know, wouldn't have been in it with us. But, heave round, Gray, with your interesting description."

Then Gray took him all over the ship, and down below too, into the compartments where brave men fight or faint and bleed and die. He showed him how the touching of a button could bring in the cable, and how the bells spoke to engineers and officers. Then into the darksome engine-rooms, where stokers often died of heat apoplexy. Showed him the turrets and how simply but easily they could be trained, spoke of Jackie in the turret, and Jack behind the terrible swift firing guns, with which they were going to riddle the Dons' vessels as soon as ever they had a chance; he talked of sponsons, barbettes, tops, from which rifles and revolvers should ring, and the Conning Tower itself. (That is right, Mr. Compositor, give Conning Tower capital letters, for

“The Conning Tower is the one-man power
And the soul of the ship holds sway
And the turrets turn and guns are trained
In the newest kind of way.”)

“You know a little bit now, don’t you?” said Gray.

“O yes, an awful lot. As much as I know of Greek and quadratic equations. It seems to me the soul of the ship has just to sit in that little heaven up yonder, touch a button now and then and let the cruiser herself do all the rest. Seems very simple, but only ——”

“Only what, *mon ami*?”

“Only *I* should be always touching the wrong button.”

“Heigho!” he added. “I shall dream about all this to-night.”

Probably he did, but now, as the New York speeds onward and on, through the sea so blue, Desmond is quite as well up to the workings of a great floating fighting machine as any young officer on board.

CHAPTER IV

"Dogs that bark but cannot bite"

"With guns, and ships, and men of steel
I fear not war with foes like these.
So westward steams my gallant fleet,
To sweep the Yankees from the seas."

—Cervera's Soliloquy.

I DON'T think that boys have altered very essentially since I, myself, was a nipper, and that is seven or eight years ago. Perhaps a little more, for time does fly—because it has nothing else to do, I suppose. But, anyhow, when a new boy came to our school he was speedily interviewed. A lad of his own size was deputed to do this work, and the questions put to him ran somewhat as follows :

"What's the first o' your name?"

"What does your father do?"

"Have you anything to trock?" (barter.)

"Can ye fecht (fight)? I'll fecht ye, for fun."

Then jackets were thrown aside and at it the two would go pell-mell, and so the newcomer took his place in the school according to his fighting standard.

But curiously enough the boys with whom I

fought most viciously, were those who afterward became my very dearest friends and some are so even till this day.

Well it was the same with Desmond and Beaver. They had not actually fought, but relations had been severely strained and hence they had come to respect each other. So they were very often together both on shore and afloat.

Sam Beaver was an American—true blue, one might say—for his family dated back to the brave days when the British yoke was thrown off, if not before.

I must confess that there is one virtue about the Yankees, which even in the great Northern and Southern war, in the early sixties, though then very young, I used to admire—probably because I did not find it among the British, whether English or Scotch. When the Confederates or Federals were beaten they "owned up" and confessed frankly that they had had the worst of it.

This is downright manly!

But O! dear me, you shall never meet a man or woman in English society whose ancestors did not come over with the conqueror, and going farther back in history I have been told by a South Briton, that our Bannockburn was an exaggeration as described by the Scotch. That in fact the Scotch made the most of it.

"My! won't the Dons be daft!" said a Scotch engineer-assistant, as the great war-ships went tear-

ing through the blue water, "when we blockade Havana."

He was right, they were.

But, dear me! the Americans were only going to be permitted to stay there a limited time. The Spaniards, so the poor rank and file believed, were going to pitch them all into the sea, except some prisoners, whom they meant to bring on shore to have some fun with at a bonfire. But some of the Yanks would find their way inside that bonfire, and that would make the fun all the funnier, you know.

However, they had to catch them first.

That was the worst of it.

Ah! many a splendid basin of hare-soup has been spoiled, just for want of one little item—the hare itself.

General Blanco was what some youths would call "a frightful swell," in his own estimation that is, and his bombastic speech to the people of Havana, was wonderful in its way. He was going to do all sorts of great things as soon as the enemy neared the city and the ports of Morro. He swore he would, and the people also used swear-words, at his request. Support him? Rather. They would stand at his back till he was like a riddle! Especially the Cubans, whom Spain had done so much to civilise!

When Morro was about to begin the fun by opening fire on the New York, a Spanish gunner said to his mate, "You see that Yankee Cruiser?"

"For certain!"

"Then take your last look at her—I'm going to fire." But his shots all fell short or went down below somewhere to scare the sharks.

"Aren't we going to reply?" said Dess.

"No," said Sam Beaver, laughing. "No good answering a dog that barks but cannot bite."

"I haven't got my range quite yet," said the Spanish gunner. "But anyhow I have given them a terrible fright and they dare not shoot back!"

But the New York, much to the joy of its crew, had some rare excitement. Nothing pleases Jackie better than a chase. It is a boat-race on a big scale and he is willing to bet all his buttons on it. Besides, there is the prospect of prize money.

And not one but many fat prizes were taken. Soon after this Jackie cheered and Desmond and Beaver said, "Hooray!" in a lower key.

But one splendid prize the New York missed. She was the *Montserret*, with about \$1,000,000 in specie, twenty guns, and 1,000 soldiers, or men who passed as soldiers.

Well, the blockading squadron of Admiral Sampson was brought into action after five days of masterful inactivity. For the Dons were swarming around their forts and adding every hour to their strength. He determined therefore to edge along the coast and test his artillery. Desmond was delightfully excited and so was honest Beaver when the signal for general quarters was passed from

the bridge,—the bugle sounded out its heart-inspiring call.

In our British navy I have known our brave fellows be at their quarters (night) three minutes after the bugle sounded, or drum went *trr—r—r—r!* The men actually turned their hammocks in their hurry and you might have met some of them tearing along the lower deck and dressing as they ran.

Well I have no doubt the Americans are quite as active.

Punta Gorda was the sound battery or earthwork the Dons were busiest at, and I am told that when the order was given a man called Waist on the New York was the first to awaken the echoes, with a shot from an eight-inch gun. Good name, because he was in what in olden times would have been called the waist of the ship.

But shot after shot now went roaring through the air and finally a broadside—from port.

It was getting very hot on shore, and the Spanish officer, not knowing what to do, scratched his head—Dons often do that.

A happy thought! The Dons would—go to dinner. But another fort took up the firing. Sampson opened fire on this next. In five minutes' time, the Dons there also thought that dinner would be the best thing for them.

The New York now returned to assist the Cincinnati in demolishing the earthworks, and this little

business was completed in a remarkably short time.

The telegrams of the Spanish general commanding—Blanco himself I believe—to his queen were heroic. The newspapers in Madrid made great fun over the bombardment. If this was all, some of them said, that *Los Americanos* could do, they ought to have been kept at home so that their men might have the advantage of a little training in a school of gunnery.

Such headings as the following might also have been seen in the Spanish papers.

TERRIBLE BOMBARDMENT OF PUNTA GORDA

BY THE YANKS.

APPALLING LOSS OF LIFE ON SHORE.

ONE MULE KILLED!!

This was the standing joke in Spain for many weeks. It needs but little to make fun for fools. The facts remained however. The forts were silenced and deserted, so Sampson left the Puritan and Cincinnati to keep an eagle eye on them while he returned to Havana.

* * * * *

We have to note now that a very large and powerful fleet sailed from Spain, under the command of Admiral Cervera. He was going to sweep the Yankees from the seas. I am not told that this

officer hoisted a broom at the mast-head, as did the old Dutch admiral when he proposed sweeping the English from off the face of the ocean.

Cervera meant business all the same. So he said, and this is probably why, instead of dashing right across the ocean, and engaging Sampson, he sailed to that Portuguese colony—the Cape de Verde Islands.

But the Portuguese were neutral and the Spanish admiral was informed that he must leave.

He did so reluctantly—just like a schoolboy getting out of bed on a winter's morning—and sailed away, on April 29th.

But whither went he?

Well, that was the puzzle.

He did the remarkable disappearance dodge.

However, there was no saying where he might not pop up again all of a sudden, like a “Jack-in-the-box,” and frighten women and children. Commodore Scott Schley's Flying Squadron was ordered to keep a good lookout for him all along the eastern shores of America and elsewhere. He had under him the great battle-ships Texas and Massachusetts, his own flagship, the cruiser Brooklyn, and two other armed cruisers.

He had to assist him in this patrol duty, Admiral Howell, with his Dixie, Yankee, Prairie and Yosemite.

And these, reader, were armed and subsidised passenger ships. I need hardly add that in the

event of our going to war, a very large number of our biggest and best ships of the mercantile marine would soon be turned over to our government.

Cervera's fleet, it may be as well to mention at once, was really a very strong one, consisting of such first-class cruisers as the Infanta Maria Teresa, the Almirante, the Cristobal Colon and the Viscaya, with a lot of torpedo boat destroyers.

The Viscaya, by the way, had been sent to New York when the unfortunate Maine went to Havana. The Yankees did not blow her up, however. On the contrary, the officers and men had been treated with the very greatest hospitality and courtesy.

* * * * *

Admiral Sampson continued his gunnery practice. Indeed, he did quite a deal of demolishment on the north coast of Cuba, and I dare say he killed another mule or two, and doubtless wounded a good many *donkeys*.

One word here about two ships of the American navy, concerning which much uneasiness was felt. One was the Paris—a converted liner—that was reported to have been seized by the Dons in the English Channel. *She* came up smiling, however, in good time.

The other was the Oregon, who, when the war broke out, was far away in southern waters, and had to make a voyage along the coast of many thousands of miles. *She* was an immense man-o'-war,

and could have licked the whole of Cervera's fleet—one down t'other come on.

The United States war authorities were so far happy, then, when they heard of her safe arrival at Rio. But the Spanish admiral would likewise hear of this. What more likely than that he should head her off and cut her out?

He ought to have done so. With the experience he had stored up under that well-domed and handsome head of his, I am astonished he did not. The first good blow in a fight is always the best, and the Oregon would have made a splendid addition to the Spanish navy.

“He who fights and runs away,
Will live to fight another day.”

Well, the Oregon did not really run away, but she got there all the same, and she did live to fight another day.

And that day was indeed a bloody one, as, before my story is ended, we shall find out.

* * * * *

On board the flagship of Admiral Schley, of the Flying Squadron, our friend and hero, Ted McCoy, soon showed his good qualities, and became a general favourite, not only among his own messmates, but with the officers as well. In his mess he could spin good stories and sing rattling good songs. Moreover, he was a bit of a poet of the skittish denomination of the rhyming brotherhood. There

was really nothing in his verses except that they rippled over with droll expressions, satire and sarcasm that made the reader laugh.

The officers got hold of some of these, and even Schley himself. The admiral called Ted on the quarter-deck one day and questioned him as to his former life, and when Teddy briefly told him all, he expressed some astonishment that he had not accepted Adeane's good offer and gone into the scribbling department.

"By your leave, sir," said Ted, "I'd rather scribble to my sweetheart and write silly verses for my messmates.

"Besides," he added, "it is real fighting I want to see, sir, and it isn't much of that I'd be having with a pen behind my ear."

"You would like to be under fire?" said Admiral Schley, slyly.

"Indeed, then, and I wouldn't mind."

"Well, my boy, you shall have your wish, and when we have a real engagement with the Dons, I'll have you up alongside me to take notes. Now you may go. I may just tell you that I think you a brave Irish lad!"

Ted coloured with joy at these kindly words. Then he saluted and retired.

* * * * *

Let us close this chapter by taking a peep on board the dear old Bonito.

All hands there, including Charlie Chat and

Cheese, found it insufferably dull now that the fleet had gone. But Adeane was never the man to do things by halves, and he determined to offer his services as a dispatch boat to one or other of the fleets, or to both.

"You are a whole-hearted man, sir," said Sampson, when Captain Adeane ran over and reported himself on board the New York; "I shall gladly take you as a supernumerary, and will ask you to-day to take a letter for me to Tampa, where you will find some stir going on."

Tampa is a town in Florida and, being not far from Cuba, was considered a handy place at which to concentrate troops that, ere long, were destined to make a descent upon the Cuban coast.

These did sail at last, but, alas! they seemed to be but badly organised for fighting, and neither their commissariat nor ammunition and rifle departments were in first-class order. No such muddle had been made, however, as that which signalised our own first attempts at the invasion of the Crimea.

I do not think that, when on the war-path, troops should be overfed, because we don't want bloated soldiers, for a hungry soldier, unless he be a Scottish Highlander, is a heartless fighter. It is Burns who says:

"But tak' a Scotchman frae the hill,
Clap in his mon' a whisky gill,
He has nae thocht but how to kill
Twa at a time."

But as to the army at Tampa they did show the stuff they were made of when they got the chance. Only this was a little later on.

Ted McCoy was permitted to visit his dear friends on the Bonito, on a fortnight's furlough.

He felt a trifle shy at first, being in blue-jacket rig, thinking that perhaps Aileen would not like her brother dressed thus.

He put on his best clothes, however, and he had already been rated. For believe me, my boy-readers, that in no civilised navy or army does honesty, aptitude, good conduct and pluck go unrecognised.

CHAPTER V

Life on The Bold Bonito—The Nigger Boys— A Race For Dear Life

“Now blow, good wind, and waft us on,
There’s danger on the sea,
While darkness falling, deep intense,
To-night our friend shall be.”

TEDDY’S welcome on board the Bonito was really a right hearty one. No one had seen him for quite a long time—or what Aileen called a long, long time. She said, right sincerely too, that she liked him better brown and bare-necked, than if he had on a linen collar and blue coat.

Mrs. Adeane made him join the saloon mess of course, and everyone was delighted at the droll yarns he had to spin concerning life in the Flying Squadron.

When he came first on board, Charlie Chat simply let himself spread, and as that spreading was over all the decks, fore and aft, it quite took away his breath so that, when he returned to bark joyfully at Ted, the sounds were very hoarse and wheezy indeed.

Cheese was less demonstrative but equally affectionate, singing loudly as he walked round and

round the boy, fore and aft and on both beams, rubbing his shoulders on his baggy trowsers.

He finished off by leaping on his shoulder, and Ted marched down below with pussy seated just where he was.

There was one person he missed and that was the bonnie blue eyed lassie Fatima, who had promised to become the wife of poor Hodson.

I want as little real grief as possible in the stories I write, but I must mention Fatima. The shock to her nerves had been terrible, but Mrs. Adeane thought that the fresh sea-air and kindness would strengthen her, and that forgetfulness would come, or at least contentment with her lot.

She had never really smiled since Hodson's death, and was often found in tears.

One bright moonlight night, about the end of the first watch, (from eight P. M. till twelve midnight) the men having but little to do, were congregated about the fore-castle, talking and smoking, when suddenly a figure in white was seen standing, ghost-like and uncertain, close beside the cabin companion.

The figure, after a moment or two, glided rapidly toward the lee bulwarks then sprang thereon. The Bonito was under easy sail on a leading wind. Suddenly Fatima,—for it was she—who had paused as if to look her last on the ship, swayed forward and disappeared.

She was never seen again, though a boat was quickly lowered and the crew searched about for

fully half-an-hour. But Fatima had left a little note to Mrs. Adeane :

"Adieu! adieu!" it ran. "I would fain stay, I would fain be with you, but *he* is calling, calling, and where *he* is I must be also."

It is evident enough that the poor girl had been bereft of her reason. But that was the end of a Cuban story of true love, believe it who may.

Away went the Bonito then for Tampa Bay, and Ted told Aileen more than once that it was just like the dear old times begun again.

They were but seldom apart, these two, whether below or on deck, and the dog and cat followed them like their shadows.

The priest and doctor were both in fine form and more than once the latter had asked Captain Adeane to lend him to the American Navy for a time to "help whip the Spaniards."

"Later on, Dr. Ramsay, later on. I hardly know what I should do without you."

The Bonito steamed to Tampa with all speed, but on her return voyage, having nothing particular to do, the millionaire determined to sail, and to take a turn round to Pinos to make sure the chalet was still standing.

Nothing could have pleased anyone on board better. The weather was certainly hot, but the sea was darkly blue and just rippled or little more, with a seven-knot breeze, which was very refreshing to those who lounged beneath the awning.

I do not think anyone was sorry to be out of Cuba. In the days of peace the life at the beautiful hacienda was all one long, pleasant dream, but when wild war came—ah! how different! and they could only look back to scenes they had then come through, as one recalls the memory of some fearful nightmare.

Captain Adeane was seldom what one might have called unhappy, yet there were times when he had his periods of depression. Was he afraid of being reduced to penury? Perhaps, yet he knew that the present moment he could not have faithfully described himself as a millionaire, for many of his American securities were now hardly worth the paper on which they had been printed. His Cuban estate was for the time being, at all events, valueless. Machinery, mills and stores had been destroyed; his hacienda's ruined walls had tottered and fallen before a hurricane-wind, shortly after he had left, and the plantation fires had completely exterminated his crops of tobacco, sugar, etc.

"It will come right in time," good Father McDowney had told him, consolingly. "Just wait and hope and trust."

"Well, but my Philippine scheme!" he laughed, somewhat bitterly. "Don't you think, my friend, I was a bit too hasty over that?"

"Wait and trust!" said McDowney again. "Philippines won't pay for a bit. I'm no business man myself, but I'd hold on to everything."

"Yes, true; but I've made up my mind about one thing, father."

"And what is that, sure?"

"It is this: Many poor people bought shares in my Philippine company and may be living now to repent it. McDowney, they shall not lose, and if things come to the worst and America be beaten in this war ——"

"Impossible, captain, impossible! Sure, it is the liver of you that is wrong entirely, and Ramsay must see to it quickly."

Adeane laughed. "I dare say," he said, "my liver isn't in such good form as it used to be when I was a young man. But you won't let me tell you what I mean to do."

"Well? I'm waiting."

"If I sink then, not a soul shall be dragged down in the same vortex that swallows me up. Every shareholder, poor or wealthy, shall be paid in full, even if I have to go back to old Ireland and live in a little cottage on the green braes of wild Connemara."

Father McDowney held out his hand and shook that of his friend right heartily.

"Bless you," he said, "for these same words. I always knew you were a man and a gentleman, and I know now you are a Christian, and that is better than all. Honour and a good name give a clear conscience, Adeane, which alone can lead to happiness here and hereafter.

"Bedad!" he added, comically, a moment after, "if you go to settle in Galway wilds, it's myself that'll settle there beside you, and I'll play the fiddle all the week to cheer you and preach a bit to the poor folks on Sunday."

The Bonito encountered a heavy gale when still a long way off Pinos.

This drove him far south, as it raged for days. He could not have steamed against it, so he preferred to lie to.

* * * * *

On board the Bonito were two very interesting personages, neither of whom considered himself small deer, though they quarreled with each other and seemed determined to keep it up "to the bitter end."

These were Dickie Straw's very words as he pointed in haughty scorn toward Snowflake, who was standing amidships:

"Dat leetle black niggah," he told the boatswain, "aboose me, and call me darkie and good-foh-nuffin trash! What foh he do so? Tell me dat. I'se one officer man. He on'y jes' de cat's niggah boy. I fight he to de bittah end. P'haps I chop he head off and frow it to de bulldog. What he do den, I wondah? Yah!"

"Look ye," said the boatswain. "If I catch anyone av the lot av ye talkin' about bitter ends again, it's the bitter end av a rope he'll have on his riggin'.

Moind that same. Oi'm a man av me word, and so was my mother before me."

But even now those two little black ragamuffins showed no signs of being conquered.

Quite the reverse in fact.

"Dat—dat leetle darkie use words like dat to a colour'd gem'lum! What next? yah! I show he 'ow to respect de quatahde'k."

He made a rush for Dickie Straw of so determined a character that the boatswain, who was short, fair and forty, was rolled right away into the lee scuppers.

Then Dick Straw seized Snowflake by the poll and Snowflake seized Dick in the same way. Well, they had still one hand each to spare and you may easily guess these weren't idle. The historical fight between the Kilkenney cats, in which after the battle only a little bit of fluff was picked up, was nothing to this. Charlie Chat came bounding aft, but for the life of him he couldn't make up his canine mind which to side with, for the nigger lads were both kind to him.

The boatswain, after picking himself up, picked up a bit of rope and went for the two of them.

"No ye don't," cried Charlie Chat, or something to that effect. "I won't have you touch them. Wurr—gurr—rr—r!"

As there was no reasoning with a well-bred bulldog in this frame of mind, the boatswain and the crew, who had come rushing on deck, simply stood

looking on, till the lads, breathless and bleeding, were fain to get out of grips.

"Ha! ha!" said Snowflake. "I tole ye I'd gib you Spain!"

"Pooh!" cried Dick. "I gib you Amelican propah."

Both were sent aloft after the mate came on deck, one into the foretop, the other into the main, and ordered to stop there all day. If they dared to talk they would be brought down and keel-hauled.

The mate certainly did not mean what he said. Keel-hauling was a terrible punishment, sometimes inflicted by a merchant skipper on an incorrigible, in the good old days of Dibdin the poet. A rope with two very long ends was passed around the culprit's waist and under the bowsprit. While two sailors held the ropes, the man was dropped under the keel and actually *drawn* up under it from the weather side to the lee. If the ship's bottom was covered with barnacles, the poor wretch was brought on board half drowned and with terrible wounds on face and body, from which he might or might not die.

The boys didn't speak, but made signs of vengeance which were comical in the extreme.

Well, now, I am just going to tell the reader straight away how all this ended.

I never believed, mind, that they really had any ill-will against each other at heart, but nevertheless

Father McDowney's priestly advice was not given much heed to; but one day when the Bonito was beating up toward Pinos, after the gale, with a roughish sea on, there suddenly arose the cry of "Man overboard!"

"Man and lower the life-boat."

Stapleton, himself, let go the large copper-balled life-buoy, chiefly used at night because it has an upright in the centre on which, by pulling a kind of bell-handle, a beacon is lit before lowering. Just as he had let it go he turned and asked who had fallen over.

"Snowflake, sir, poor little beggar!"

At that moment a black, agonised face was seen in the white foam of the ship's wake, and, at the same time, a black figure dashed rapidly past the mate, and dived from the dinghy astern.

That was Dickie Straw!

And when the life-boat (the gig, really) made its way to the life-buoy, there were both lads astride of it, laughing and chatting away in the most friendly way, despite the fact that the fin of a monster shark was appearing above water every now and then, and getting nearer and nearer to the buoy and the boys.

When they got safely on board, the mate asked Dick why he had risked his life to save his enemy.

"'Cause he a man and a bruddah, sah," was the brave reply.

And the two shook hands, and were ever after the greatest of friends.

* * * * *

The island chalet was safe, and, as no insurgents ever came here, all was quiet and peaceful. The Bonito lay four days at anchor in the little woodland bay, and the saloon folks lived on shore, including Charlie Chat and Cheese.

As there was no knowing, however, that some Spaniard might not land here to loot, Captain Adeane took his family with him when he left to join the North Atlantic squadron once more.

The priest had heard Sampson say that he would shortly pay Santiago a little visit and get up an entertainment there, with fireworks thrown in, just by way of amusing the Spanish.

Adeane concluded he must be there now, and thus we find him sailing eastward and away.

There was no American fleet there, however, and so he quickly set sail again eastward, flying the British flag still, until he rounded Cape Maisi and bore west-northwest past Baracoa and Nipé Bay.

All was going well on board and the breeze was a sparkling one and well aft. So the brave Bonito went dancing along in it, cutting the water like a knife, rising and falling, or swaying and rolling as pleasantly as if she had been a living thing.

In war time ships need to take every precaution,

especially if one of the belligerents be unscrupulous in character. So Adeane had a good lookout kept, and one of the best young sailors in the ship was stationed high up in the main-top-gallant cross trees, whence he could sweep the sea with a good glass in all directions.

"On deck there," he bawled, one forenoon.

The Bonito was then well to the northward of Sagua la Grande.

"Ay, ay," shouted the mate, "but if you have anything to report come down."

The brave Jack did.

"It is a long, low, black steamer, sir, just hove over the east-southeast horizon. She is smoking like the mischief, sir, beggin' yer pardon."

"Bad coal, eh?"

"That's it, sir."

"Then she's a Spaniard. Up you go again, and watch her motions. I shall alter our course several points, to try her."

This was done as soon as the outlook got once more seated, and very quickly after this another hail came deckward.

"She has altered her course, too, sir, and is crack-ing on after us."

The mate immediately reported to the captain, and orders were given to get up fires with all speed.

As ill-luck would have it, the wind now chopped round, becoming more westerly, but much lighter.

Before the fires could be lit and steam got up, the

mysterious vessel was visible from deck, and Father McDowney, with his field-glasses, could see that she was flying the beautiful flag of Spain.

What was to be done? Fighting was out of the question, and to get into the hands of that gunboat meant the greatest misfortune that could befall the Bonito and her crew. The yacht herself would be confiscated, and Adeane and his family kept in loathsome dungeons until the war was over.

As far as rifles went, and one good quick-firing gun, Adeane was in a position to give battle, but this could only end in dire disaster, with murder to follow their capture. Never before in all his life had Adeane felt so much anxiety, but he was a brave man, and so took care not to show it.

"Thank God!" he said, *sotto voce*, when the screws began to revolve. Then aloud:

"Go ahead at full speed!"

Sail was taken in, and it was soon evident that the engineers and stokers were doing their level best. A stern chase is a long chase.

And all that day the Bonito cracked on. Though the enemy did not come up hand over hand, it was feared she might overhaul our friends before night-fall.

The engineer came aft.

"A' think," he said, "a' could get anither knot out of her by throwin' a drop o' oil into the fire, or shovin' a lump or two o' pork aneath the boilers. Hav' I your leave, sir?"

"My dear fellow, do as you like, but, for goodness' sake, do so quickly."

The increase of speed was soon apparent.

The gunboat was now but little more than two miles astern.

A puff of white smoke from her fore-tower! A puff of smoke with a centre tongue of fire. But the shell only tore up the water far in the Bonito's wake.

Every one, including Aileen, was now on deck, and the excitement was very great.

It was a race for dear life they were engaged in, and all knew it.

"And," said Father McDowney, "they have dared to fire on the British flag."

"They don't care, my dear McDowney. We're far away at sea, you know, and I never met a Spanish captain yet who had a conscience."

Slowly set the sun. Shot after shot came whizzing past or over the yacht, but none struck.

The sun's lower limb had touched the horizon and a broad triangle of blood-red light, its apex pointing toward the ship, came from the west.

A shell burst over the Bonito. But its splinters did no damage.

Then fell darkness, deep, intense, a rising wind, heavy clouds and a choppy sea.

"Bank fires and set sail! But no noise, men."

Then the course was altered, and as never a light was lit anywhere except in the saloon, the yacht

stole over the water ghost-like and almost invisible. Even the ports were blinded and closed and a tarpaulin thrown over the skylight.

They were safe for the night, but what might not the dawn of day reveal?

CHAPTER VI

The Battle at Manila—Admiral Dewey's Boyhood

"In battle form, the fleet now ranged,
Lies silent on the sea;
'Tis that the men to heaven may cry,
And pray for victorie."¹—

WHAT daylight did reveal was this: a sky as blue and ethereal as ever artist conveyed to canvas, a sea of azure without a ruffle, tiny green islets that seemed to hang in the sky with, beneath each, a line of snow-white where the heaving sea broke lazily on a coral beach, but never a sail in sight, far or near.

And steam was up again once more and the Bonito making good her way westward, to the delight of all, especially of Aileen and her pets.

Seldom perhaps were hearts lifted more thankfully heavenward than were those to-day, at morning prayers in the saloon.

But in forty hours more the Bonito was safely under the wings of the gunboats and torpedo boats of the great North Atlantic squadron, and in a few

¹The most solemn time at sea, is the three minutes allowed for prayer before a fleet engages.—G. S.

days after, Ted, much to Aileen's sorrow, was transferred to his own ship in Schley's squadron.

But where could Cervera be with the splendid fleet of bold, chivalrous Spain.

Nobody could answer that. Merchant-ships averred that they had seen the fleet far to the north and evidently about to make a descent on New York.

The skipper of a Yankee schooner, on the other hand, swore he had been chased by a huge vessel answering to the description of the *Almirante*, and this far to the south and east.

So nobody knew what to believe, and things had begun to get somewhat slow and dull in the fleet.

But on or about the third of May Admiral Sampson's larger vessels sailed from Key West, into which she had made a grand rush, in order to coal. She sailed under sealed orders.

These are never opened until the fleet is well at sea. It was then discovered that they were to make all speed for Porto Rico, an island belonging to the Spanish, and lying to the east of the British possession, San Domingo.

For it must be here, if anywhere, that Cervera had called in to "coal ship."

Meanwhile, as Desmond is off Atlantic way in his brave ship the *New York*, let us pay a visit once more to the far Philippine Islands—an imaginative visit, that is, and find out all about the great naval battle at Manila.

A telegram, dated May 1st, had reached Presi-

dent McKinley. He wasn't the man to keep any good news to himself a moment longer than was necessary.

The telegram came from Dewey—Admiral George Dewey, there, you have him all complete—and he was and is at this moment America's pet sailor-boy. Why, ladies in the states actually call their favourite Persian cats after him, and among boys you will find many a rattling good bull-terrier, who answers to the name of Dewey, to say nothing of guinea-pigs.

Well this telegram of Dewey's spread like wild-fire all over America, and the sensation it created was too great to be described.

What a wonderful thing is this telegraph system, that can flash words of joy from a distance of over 6,000 miles, in a few seconds, to the heart of every inhabitant of so great a continent as North America.

And this telegram was so brief, and so calm too. Had Dewey been simply wiring all was well in his fleet, and that he hoped to fall in with the Dons some day ere long, it could not have been more laconic. But those who received it could read between the lines, and no wonder that as they did so, tears of joy dimmed the eyes of many an American man and woman, even at the breakfast-table. Here it is:

“MANILA, May 1.—Squadron reached Manila,

daybreak this morning. Immediately engaged enemy and destroyed the following Spanish vessels: *Reina Cristina*; *Don Antonia de Ulloa*; *Isla de Luzon*; *Isla de Cuba*; *General Lezo*; *Marquis de Duero*; *Cano*; *Velasco*; *Isla de Mindano*, a transport and water-battery at Cavite. The squadron is uninjured, and only a few men are slightly wounded. Only means of telegraphing is to American Consul at Hong Kong. DEWEY."

How every Yankee heart must have thrilled with pride and glory now. A victory like this brings back vividly before my mind's eye the stories I have read of the triumphs the British navy used to gain in the grand days of old. The battle of the *Baltic* for instance, Nelson's victory over the Danes. Just a verse or two from Tom Campbell's poem :

“Of Nelson and the north
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce went forth,
All the might of Denmark's crown
And their arms along the deep proudly shone.
By each gun a lighted brand,
In a bold determined hand,
And the prince of all the land
Led them on.”

No wonder readers that :

“While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line,
There was silence deep as death
For a time.”

For a time only, though, for :

“ ‘Hearts of Oak’ our captains cried, then each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death-shade round the ships,
Like the hurricane-eclipse
Of the sun.”

And so the battle now begun, raged on :

“Till a feeble cheer the Danes
To our cheering sent us back ;—
While their shouts along the deep slowly boom :—
Then ceased,
—and all is wail,
As they strike the shattered sail,
Or in conflagration pale,
Light the gloom.”

Surely no more blood-stirring and spirited lines ever fell from the pen of Scottish poet, and yet Dewey’s simple telegram to the people at home was probably quite as effective.

But virtually speaking, the battle of the Baltic was won by one man and that was Nelson, the soul of the fleet, and the great naval engagement at Manila was won by—Dewey.

I must confess that I myself, previous to the war against effete Spain, was one of the boys who knew little or nothing of Dewey, and not a very great deal of the new American Navy either. So when war was declared I took to studying this latter, well remembering the brave deeds that were done by ships, and their crews in ’63 and ’64, although I was then but a youth.

After the battle of Manila, last year I found myself asking, "What manner of man is Dewey?"

I came across photographs of several notables across the Atlantic, and I liked Dewey's face. He seemed to me a man with a purpose, a man meant for something, a man with a fixed idea, that it would take a deal of lever power to move or shake.

It is exceedingly difficult to judge men's characters from photos. Schley looks thoughtful, clever, and kind. Secretary Long, jolly. Sigsbee and I would have much to say had I the honour to meet him. Captain Charles E. Clark is a British officer out and out, and he is going to do big licks yet. As for President McKinley—a Scot I suppose—he looks stern and just, and has a really handsome face.

Well, boy-readers, Dewey proved at Manila what manner of man he was.

But this was not going to satisfy me.

Had he ever been a boy, I wondered?

That is a *real* boy. Not one of your little curly-haired "kids" that are fond of lollipops, in whose "mim-mouths" butter would remain solid, when mamma or auntie is in the room, but who torment the cat and pull the legs from flies when they are gone.

Fact is, I like a boy with a spice of the monkey in him, but he must have a brave, kind heart to back it up. Now here is what my reading gave

me to know shortly after that sea-fight in the Philippines. It was an old kindly woman from Vermont, who told the little yarn.

"Did I know Georgie Dewey? Well I swan. But I guess he were a droll lad and about as full of mischief as a little old nick. Could scheme, too. Here is a tale of his boyhood. All boys I suppose are fond of apples. Well there was a particular tree that George and his playmates used to pass most every night, and their mouths did water I can assure you, to see the rosy-cheeked fruit risin' and fallin' like, on the wind.

"‘I say,’ cries Dewey, one afternoon, ‘if you two fellows’ll help me, we’ll each have a handkerchief-ful of those beauties to-night! I know when old B—— goes to bed. There’ll be a moon, and Towser is always taken indoors.’

"So, when old B—— went to have a look at his tree next morning, his white hair just stood bolt upright and his hat fell off.

"Towser picked it up and took that old hat into his kennel to chew at his leisure.

"‘It’s the boys,’ he groaned; ‘and that ne’er-do-well Dewey’s at the bottom of the play.’

"The schoolmaster was informed, and he got some sneaks to tell him if there was likely to be another raid on the orchard and when. Well, Dewey himself informed those sneaks that he and two others would have some fun that night, at B——’s. And no lie either.

“‘Ah, thank you, my dear lads,’ said the school-master, ‘for telling me. Here’s a nickel for you, and you are good boys, and will become great men yet. May be even school-teachers, though such high position doesn’t fall to the lot of all.’

“Then the teacher determined to watch, armed with a cane. (*Arma Virumque Cano*,’ is the first line in Virgil, you know, and means ‘Arm a man with a cane.’)

“The boys knew he would come, and so they placed a hogshead, with nothing in it, just outside the open fence, and then went and hid.

“The moon shone very brightly, when the teacher came.

“‘That’ll do fine,’ says he, ‘I can watch the nickems through the bung-hole.’

“So in he crept into his hiding.

“And out came the boys—Dewey first—from theirs. They crept quietly up to the barrel. No pussy could have been flyer or slyer. Then they gave the barrel a push and off down the hill it went, the teacher shouting ‘*mar bleu!*’ for all he was worth.

“He was limping, next morning, and had a bad black eye. But Dewey and his mates looked as innocent as three baa-lammies and weren’t even suspected.

“Dewey,” continued the old dame, “when only a little bit of a nipper was asked by a neighbour to take her baby out for an airing in her pram. She

said, 'If you'll give her a nice run I'll *mebbe* give you something.'

"But uncertainties didn't appeal to Dewey. 'She shall have a run and no mistake,' he said, to himself, and off he started at the gallop, baby's poor little insides being well-nigh shaken out of her. Up and down, and up and down, quite astonishing everyone who saw him.

"'Here's a wild Indian on the boundless prairie!' he shouted. 'Here's Crowfoot on his untamable steed, feathers and all!'

"But just then the wheel caught the curb and over went the whole show.

"Georgie quickly bundled in mats, pillow, baby, rugs and all, higgledy-piggledy.

"Then he signed to a gutter-snipe boy.

"'Want to earn a nickel?'

"'Ah, ay?'

"'Well, wheel this pram to No. 4, yonder, and knock. Tell the lady, that if she shakes the things, she'll find the baby hid somewhere at the bottom, and that it has had a two-horse power run. She'll give you a nickel.'

"'On the ear!' he said, as he ran right away home. And my! the grass didn't have a chance to grow up between his toes till he got there, either."

* * * * *

I have a whole collection of yarns about Dewey's

early days, and if only ten per cent. of them are true he must have been a broth of a boy.

Just one little yarn illustrative of Dewey's love for his sailors. It is told by one of the war correspondents, and, therefore, is just as true as they make such stories.

Dewey was then captain of a gunboat, called the *Pensacola*, (after a large and important town in Florida), and the vessel was at Manila.

Well, sailors will be sailors, and some liberty men had seen somebody drinking on shore, at Manila, and I suppose the fumes from their grog-glasses had gone to the bold Jackies' noddles, for, of course, a man-o'-war sailor never looks at wine, or rum either.

So they began to sing, and continued singing along the street. They intimated to all, that they belonged to the stars and stripes, and to the eagle that soared, and that if they did not believe them, they would fight any fifty men, just there and then. The dust began to fly after that, and some Spanish noses were set a-bleeding to allay it. The guard was turned out, but the Jackies fought their way through the mob, reached their boats, and went singing out into the bay where their ship was swinging at anchor.

After breakfast, next morning, the port captain, himself, came off arrayed in full uniform, and looking as proud as a pouter pigeon.

Dewey received him with great courtesy, and

listened to the story of the riot. He regretted it much, but was sorry he could see no way of assisting the Don.

"I beg to differ, sir," cried the pouter, puffing his chest out still more. "You can parade your crew, and I have men here in my boat who will speedily pick out the ringleaders."

Then, as the saying is—"Dewey's dander riz."

He pointed, heroically, to the flag that fluttered in the breeze, aloft.

"That, sir," he said, "is the Stars and Stripes; my quarter-deck is United States territory, and I'll parade my men for no blamed foreigner who ever drew breath! Good-morning!"

CHAPTER VII

How Dewey Perverted the Don—"Remember the Maine!"

"But prayers are o'er, the bugle sounds;
Now, stand by every gun,
With shout of men and fires of death,
The battle is begun."—*Anon.*

You and I, reader, have already been to Manila in the Philippines with our heroes, and we had some fun and adventure there, too.

We know Corregidor island, with its lighthouse, and we know Cavite and also the big city, old and new, with the bay, as well. So in describing the sea-fight I need not apologise for studying brevity.

The battle, I need hardly say, ranks as one of the biggest kind of victories in the history of this young but marvelous Republic, with which we may well be thankful that we can count kinship.

The Spanish general—Davila—about a week before the battle, issued a proclamation to the Filipinos, whom they had hitherto governed as kindly and thoughtfully as they did the poor Cubans! It contained so much *fan-farror* that it only excited the mirth and laughter of the insurgents of Luzon.

In this proclamation the rebels were informed that now was the time to join hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder against the impious and perfidious *Americanos*. If they did so, the *struggle would be short and decisive*, and the god of battle would grant them a victory as brilliant as the justice of their cause demanded. (Dewey gave them all that and a trifle over for luck.)

United under the glorious Spanish flag, which was ever covered with laurels, they were to fight, with the firm conviction that success would crown their efforts, and to the heathen yells of their enemies, they were to oppose the Christian and patriotic cry of VIVA ESPAÑA!

It was on the morning of the 27th of April that Dewey with his fleet sailed from a bay not far from Hong Kong. His best ships were the Olympia, bearing the admiral's flag, a smart and splendid cruiser; the Raleigh, the Baltimore, the Petrel, Concord and Boston.

The fleet dashed across the China sea and passed Corregidor island about twelve midnight. This island was fortified, but all hands were asleep.

There were batteries to the right along toward Cavite point, batteries at Cavite itself and at Pinos, more on the mainland, while in two rows in Baker bay between, lay the Spanish fleet, nine or ten in number.

A rocket thrown up discovered to the Dons the presence of the foe.

A few shots and shells were exchanged then fell silence and darkness once again.

But at eight bells in the morning watch (four A. M.) the Jackies were aroused and had a light repast.

Soon after this, the lights of Manila were sighted about five miles ahead.

But Dewey steamed well up the bay, till he could see the enemy's fleet "cuddled doon" in the bay betwixt Cavite and Pinos. It was rather soon for Dons to get up. Hammocks are cosy institutions, and Dewey could wait—or walk.

Dewey wouldn't wait, but he would *walk*. He did, too, and with a vengeance!

Up the bay, then, bearing round to the starboard, the wake of his ships forming a loop like the bight of a rope, Dewey returned toward the little bay where the Spanish fleet was ensconced. He had now the Manila forts on his left. He could have silenced these, but this was not his game.

He swept down like a wolf on the fold in which the Don's sheep lay. He would give Manila a word or two all in good time.

Dewey's pluck and courage may be learned from the fact that amidst all the storm of shot and shell that now raged around him, he stood on the bridge alone with Flag Lieutenant Lamberton, to the imminent danger of both, while Gridley, the commander, occupied the Conning Tower.

Honour to whom honour is due, however, and it is said that Admiral Montojo, on the Spanish side,

did likewise and stood there even when the bridge was almost shot away.

Indeed I should feel sorry and sore all over if I penned a sentence that might cause my young readers to imagine I did not give the Dons credit for courage and chivalry. I do; it is their awful and cowardly cruelty to the bleeding Cubans and to the rebels in the Philippines that I do so sincerely regret and hate.

On dashes the Olympia, the bolts of war falling harmlessly around her, shells bursting in the air and wounding but a few.

Dewey saw two huge balloons of white water rising near him, where mines had been fired.

The next might blow the great cruiser sky-high, as the Dons had blown the warship in Havana. But neither the admiral nor Lamberton blanched nor said a word.

Then high above the battle's roar came the famous war cry

"Remember the Maine!"

The enemy must have heard it and trembled. Nervous the Dons must have been, or the gunners only half awake. For their shot and shell fell anywhere, everywhere, except in the right place.

Then, at last, Dewey gave his commander, Gridley, a quiet order to commence firing, if quite ready.

Gridley was, and did fire, and with some effect,

while the other ships of the fleet took line and blazed away to keep him company.

The American fleet, it seems, kept in motion, swinging round parallel to the Spanish lines—if we can call an ellipse parallel, delivering the thunderbolts of war, now from port and now from starboard.

The rattle of the quick-firing guns was incessant, deafening, dreadful!

But look, what is that great armoured vessel bearing down upon the Olympia, as if desirous of finishing the battle by a blow?

It is the Reina Cristina.

This was a daring and desperate deed. But alas! for Spain, such a battle-storm poured into her that even the brave admiral was compelled to turn stern. And it was just then that a well-directed eight-inch shell from Dewey's ship raked her aft to fore. We are told that it hit her squarely, tearing inward through everything, wrecking the after boiler and blowing up the deck.

But though her men lay dead and dismembered in all directions, and though she was now on fire, the Reina kept up the battle for twenty minutes, then slowly sank.

Two torpedo boats next came tearing toward the Olympia. A shell sunk one almost at once. The other fled and was cast on shore—a wreck. Then a gunboat advanced to charge Dewey's ships, and directed her force on the McCullough.

She, too, had to fly!

Nearer and still more near now move brave Dewey's ships, and the scene was now a fearful one indeed. May so terrible a battle never rage in our English channel unless we have as brave men and even bigger ships than Dewey's to defend us. It was like a hell on the ocean wave.

"As if ships fought upon the sea,
And fiends in upper air."

But now something more strange happened than anything I have ever read of. But it redounds, nevertheless, to the courage and coolness of Admiral Dewey.

He ceased firing and drew off his ships.

Out beyond range went they.

Were they beaten? Scarcely. But the men were exhausted for want of food and with the constant excitement kept up for hours.

"Pipe all hands for breakfast!"

Breakfast and a good rest.

Then back they came to finish the fight.

It was now 11:15 A. M., and they found, that almost without exception, every ship in the Spanish fleet was on fire and *in extremis*. Swaying restlessly about like great monsters in a death struggle, burning fiercely, blowing up and—sinking.

It needed but a few more shots to complete the annihilation.

But why should I continue? Why paint my

pages redder than they are? Let us draw the curtain then, and hide the dreadful scene from our view.

There is no doubt that, even in America, after Dewey's telegram gave notice of the victory, there were many people, kind and true, who dropped a tear for the sad fate that had befallen a bold fleet and courageous foe; and as Campbell hath it for the

“Brave hearts
Once so faithful and so true
On the deck of fame that died,”

and who could also say with the poet :

“Soft sigh the winds of heaven o'er their graves!
While the billow mournful rolls,
And the mermaid's song condole,
Singing glory to the souls
Of the brave!”

Good-bye, Manila. Good-bye, Filipinos. May the possession of your islands by the foreign power never prove a thorn in the sides of the truly Christian people, that have overthrown the might and power of Spain.

CHAPTER VIII

Off to Porto Rico Bay—A Web-footed Soldier

“But where is Cervera, and where is his fleet,
Has the courage oozed out at his heels,
Does he think he'd be better, at home and in bed?
Is that how the old fellow feels?”

—*The Man on the Bridge.*

UNTIL Admiral Sampson opened his sealed orders, not he himself, much less anyone on board, had any distinct notion whither this big, strong fleet was bound. But after that the news “spread like wild-fire.” So far as I am concerned, this is merely a figure of speech; anyhow, I have never seen wild-fire spreading, but from all accounts it beats bad news.

“So we're off to have a peep at Porto Rico,” said Beaver to Desmond, as arm in arm they walked up and down, or fore and aft.

“Yes; what sort of a place is it?”

“Never been there you know, but guess from all accounts it is one of the most romantic and pretty islands ever made. Drake of ours told me. Drake's been there and everywhere, and he's done everything, or thinks he has. But the lowlands are fertile in the extreme. You've only got to cut

down the scrub and scratch the ground and it grows what you like. Coffee, sugar, and tobacco. Yams of course—and roasted in ashes with a lump of salt butter, Dess there isn't much to beat one if you're 'keeping' the middle watch and can manage to steal down into the engine-room for ten minutes. Well there are plenty of cocoanuts and bananas. Yes, and Drake says that the fruit is more abundant there than in any other part of the whole universal creation. All creation and Drake are excellent friends and old acquaintances, when he is spinning a yarn, you bet. And he told me that the mountain ranges are wide and wild, and covered to the top with splendid forests, and that the flowering trees in the island would cure the worst case of ophthalmia ever known, if the eye-sick patient only could look three times at them.

"But there are snakes up high, he says, longer than flag poles. They just fasten the end of their tail round a tree, grab you by the back of the neck—their teeth being fully an inch long above board—and proceed to wind the slack of their body round you. You can't escape them; you've just got to say your prayers, think about home and fall asleep to slow music."

"Music?"

"Yes, the music of your bones being crunched, crack—crack; cricketty-crack!"

"Ugh! I shouldn't like it."

"Mebbe not, but Drake told me for a fact—one of Drake's *true* facts, mind you, not his ordinary ones—that he was once nearly wound up like this. But as soon as he heard the first crack out came his jock-the-leg knife. He stuck it right in the python's neck, and as the beast went round and round toward the tree, where he had left his tail, ripped him all the way down. The natives had sausage skin for a month and Drake was none the worse. Mind you, Drake doesn't do anything by halves. He tells a most beautiful story. I had to give my tongue a holiday just after Drake joined the mess. I wasn't in it with Drake."

"I suppose we'll meet and fight the Dons at Porto Rico?"

"O yes, at San Juan, (pronounce San Hoo-ahn) that's a fortified bay, you know; very long bay, none too broad, with the town at the top of it. Depend upon it, old Sampson will give the 'Spaniels' convulsions. But it will take us a jolly long time to get there having these hulking 'crabs' to tug all the way."

The "crabs" Beaver referred to were the monitors so called by Jackie Tars.

What Beaver said was perfectly true. The "crabs" did spoil and delay the voyage, and Jackie, used words that are never heard in fashionable drawing-rooms.

But bless Jackie's innocent soul, that didn't mend matters a bit.

It was well that the weather kept fine, for anything like half a hurricane even would have resulted in separation, and the monitors would have been left "to yaw and wobble" as Beaver expressed it.

"Never mind," added the plucky young fellow, "we're slow but I guess we'll get there all the same and cabbage the whole beautiful and healthy island."

"Think so?"

"Think so? I'm sure. It's a thundering sight too good for the Spaniards. The eagle's going to do a bit of soaring yonder. You may bet your bootlaces on that, Adeane."

When Desmond wasn't lounging and laughing with his messmates, he was playing with the officers' pets.

Sailors must have pets, so in the American Navy you will find dogs, cats, a young and innocent bear, a cock, a white rat, or a duck even.

One soft-hearted fellow fought more than one battle with Jeannie, his pet piebald rat, kept in the slack of a garment he wore.

When not at play Desmond was at work, studying the internal economy of the ship.

And this is very intricate indeed, whether the great cruiser or battle-ship belongs to the American or the British navy.

Dess had his father's long head—well, I mean one built after the same model—and he was of a very

inquiring turn of mind. Even when a child, if any one presented him with a new toy that *did* something, Dess was never content until he dissected it and found out what made it go.

Often at night he would find his way up to the bridge, and knowing his keenness and desire to learn, the officer of the watch did not turn him back.

And mind you this latter officer must have all his wits about him, and know everything that is going on everywhere, both aboard and all around on the starlit sea.

He has a naval cadet with him, and two, sometimes three messengers within hail, and the work altogether is trying, especially if it be blowing a bit, and the smoke cut off short from the funnel-top and carried in dense dark masses over the sea.

There was little time for talk on the bridge. The officer's ears and eyes too were constantly on the alert, for the slightest accident would mean court-martialing, and, if he were found guilty of negligence, his career as a sailor would be doomed for evermore.

I tell you boys,—boys I mean who hope to go to sea and do well there—that a naval officer's duty nowadays is no sinecure, and it is getting harder every year.

I have heard of feather-bed soldiers, but a feather-bed sailor would get kicked out of his ship in a week.

The man behind the gun is one of *the* most im-

portant machines on board a fighting ship. His work I do not envy, though he always seems to take a pride in it.

Desmond tried hard to learn all he could about gunnery, but it is the hardest study afloat, and though a marine may be manufactured in a month, a month of Sundays will hardly make a true-blue British or American gunner.

'Pon my honour, and I've got a trifle left, I don't know which is the better, for, you see, reader, American Jackie is of the same old school as we ourselves are, and it just takes 300 years to make a single sailor. It has been all a matter of evolution.

Moreover Jackie makes an excellent torpedo-man, and the marine artillery it would be difficult to beat at target practice, should the target be a steel-clad battery or an iron or steel battle-ship, and he will take his stand in the tops, too, as coolly as a curate in his vicar's pulpit, and make it as hot for a foe as he knows how to.

All honour and glory, then, to this branch of the service, whether in our own wondrous navy or in that of our kinsmen across the sea.

* * * * *

I have already said that when Desmond joined the service he had to stand a good deal of banter and chaff from his messmates. But before sailing from Cuba for Porto Rico, two young marine officers joined, two commissioned Jackies or griffins. On

shore they had doubtless been downy-lipped mashers, young fellows, with their three-inch stick-up collars as stiff as the splashboards of a jaunting car.

It would have been quite impossible for the gun-room fellows not to have laughed at them and their droll ways. They were in all the glory of their first month, so to speak, with uncreased uniform, sword belts you might have seen to shave in, and doubly-gilt swords—what your British marines call cheese-knives.

Then they wanted so much, and wondered so much at everything that, really, the middy who failed to chaff them wouldn't have been human. How on earth could a true-hearted, easy-go-lucky young sailor officer stand a masher who intoned his English or lisped, and whose four fingers were almost constantly smoothing a moustache that hadn't come there yet?

Desmond really felt sorry for these chaps, as he remembered what he himself had had to endure. So, though he laughed, he did not join in the chaffing.

The chaff was often senseless enough, too.

Just a specimen or two, as proof of this.

"I say, Ginger!" Bowles remarked, at what was called dessert, and looking across the table at the fair-haired soldier, "a glass of claret with you."

"Thanks. I—I—aw—cannot refuse, but pardon me, my name is Rawlinson."

"Certainly, Ginger Rawlinson."

"No—no—George, not Ginger."

"May I join?" cries Beaver. "Brown! you old fat-head, pass the claret. Ginger, I drink to you and to your prettiest sister."

"I—I haven't a sister," says Ginger, blushing, "only just a little sweetheart."

"O then, I'm on. You'll introduce me and Bowles, won't you? Bowles always goes mad after any other fellow's mash, don't you know."

The wine mounts to young Webfoot's head and he gets quite confidential, and with flushed face, prattles prettily about his balls and parties, city and university life, and tells even about the scores of girls that have loved him "in my little time, don't you know."

"Yaas—yaas, ce'tainly," from several interested members of the mess. "Must have seen a lot of life, Ginger, that doesn't lie in our line."

"I do declare!" cried Beaver, during a lull in the conversation, and looking under the table as he spoke. "What an omission! Steward, bring Lieutenant Rawlinson a footstool at once!"

"To be shuah, sah," said a smart ebony servant. "Find I have only got an empty cheese-box, though."

"Well, bring that and place it upside down, and write 'Footstools' on the *memo* card."

"Steward!"

"That's me, sah!"

"Are hammocks piped down?"

"Long ergo, sah."

"Well, tell Mr. Rawlinson's servant, Private Block, to see that his master's night-shirt is well aired and to stand by to show him how to swing in."

Desmond felt a trifle sorry for him and the following forenoon ventured to advise him.

Moreover our sailor hero undertook to put him up to the ropes in a good many ways, and to teach him ship's *parlance*, which is certainly in every way expressive enough, though it does sound Greek to a land-lubber.

Our hero, Desmond, was nothing if not straightforward. Never was he known to beat about the bush very long. If he saw his duty, he went for it straight. When he got his aim he drew the trigger.

It was because he saw what few others had noticed, namely, that there was some good at the bottom of Ginger's heart, that he determined to be a father to him.

He took him by the arm one morning after quarters and marched along with him for a breather.

"I'm going to be a father to you!" he said, straight.

"O, ya-as," laughed Ginger, "a father, and all that sort of thing, ha! ha! good!"

"Well, Rawlinson, I'm only sixteen in years and you're a little more. But I'm sixty in experience. And I don't drink and I don't smoke."

"I'm trying—aw—aw, to learn both, it's manly, don't you know?"

"Bosh! Ginger, don't be an illustrious idiot!

Now don't touch that beastly wine. of an evening. If you only saw yourself when you do. Stupid isn't a name for it. Your drooping eyelids, your flushed face and simpering ways, it's a shilling you'd give to be shot, sure enough. When I'm twenty I may or I may not smoke. It mightn't hurt me anyhow. 'Cause I'm not nervous, but you are."

"O ya-as—what's the best thing for that?"

"The ship's pump."

"Wha-at?"

"Don't drawl your words. Talk smart. Rattle your words out like a quick-firer, or you'll never be a sailor. I said ship's pump. Come on deck with me of a morning and have the hose turned on you."

"Yes, and you think I wouldn't blush any more. It's so foolish you know."

"The hose and the breezy life you'll lead here on board and on shore, when we land to have a brush with the Dons, will soon knock the nervousness out of you."

"I'm delighted. I say, Mr. Adeane."

"Drop the Mr. It isn't 'ship-shape.'"

"Well, Adeane, you're not half a bad fellow, and when this cruel war is over, you must come and see our little place near Central Park. Mother will be de-ee-lighted.

"Well," he continued, "shall we go downstairs and join the other fellows. I'll stop the wine and the smokes."

"Right, but don't say downstairs and upstairs. Say I'm going 'below, and I'm going on deck.'"

"O, thanks!"

"It isn't stairs, it's a ladder or companion ladder."

"How funny!"

"Yes, maybe, and when you come off from shore and get on board, then as soon as you get clear of the gangway, lift your hat. You are not saluting anybody only the quarter-deck and the flag. When the stars and stripes are being hoisted or lowered you may as well salute. It looks well in a youngster, though it isn't a written law."

Desmond told him a lot more, and Ginger became a very apt pupil.

Desmond did more, he asked several of his mess-mates to have pity on the webfoot soldier, and they promised.

* * * * *

The fleet reached Porto Rico at last, only to find that Cervera with his armada—the floating might of Spain—was not here.

Admiral Sampson was not coming all this way for nothing, however, so he boldly entered the long and somewhat narrow bay and engaged the forts.

This was the first time that Ginger, the elegant, the refined, the lady-killer and mother's darling had been under fire. And I must confess as everyone else did, that he behaved wonderfully well.

Once during the terrible fire from the forts he found time to say a word to Desmond.

"I say, Dess, old man. Tell me, 'cause you know everything. When a shot is coming straight for your head should you stand erect, and perhaps have it lifted off?"

"Carried away you mean," said Dess. "No, certainly not, duck your head. We all duck. Ta, ta, I'm going on the bridge."

CHAPTER IX

Bottling up the Don—A glance at Santiago

"Hurrah!" cried brave Jackie, "so we've nailed you at last!

Why, Cervera, we thought you had gone;

Well, we sailors have shifted some grog in our day,

So now let us bottle the Don!"—*The Bridge.*

THE bold and clever Sampson had done most excellent work at San Juan, and Porto Rico was, from the date of this bombardment, virtually one of America's colonies. The battle between the forts and ships had been very hot and terrible, and while we read the accounts of it, we cannot help wondering that Sampson did so much damage with so little loss of men, or injury to his fleet.

But we must not take this as a sample of future engagements between batteries and ships of war. If the British and Americans are the best marksmen in the world, I think I am right in saying that the Dons are among the worst.

Well we are out at sea once more, though the heads and ears of both officers and men, are still singing and ringing with the awful din and roar of a modern naval fight. Indeed, the doctors had to report several cases of insomnia, that quite in-

capacitated the sufferers from doing anything like good work on deck.

"How did you like to be under fire, my dear Ginger Webfoot?" said Beaver that day at dinner.

"I was very much interested, though when I saw our fellows—the common sailors you know ——"

"Retract! retract!"

"I mean of course the brave gunner chaps firing up at the great forts, it was awful fun!"

"And you weren't afraid, Ginger?"

"O, fearfully afraid, 'cause our shot went up and the Dons' shot came down and I was in double danger, but when Adeane told me I could duck—I—why I just ducked, you know."

"Well, boys," said the president, "we're off now in search of Cervera. I'd give a day's pay to know where the skulking son of a sea-cook is ——"

"Was Cervera's mother really a sea-cook, sir?" said Ginger, innocently.

"O! come, come," cried Beaver, "do be merciful, Ginger. You'll kill me some day!"

And now the search for the Spanish fleet began to get more earnest than ever.

The news of its whereabouts was very conflicting. That it was in the West Indies no one doubted, for it had been seen by many ships of the mercantile marine, even of Britain, and duly reported.

Sampson for a time transferred his flag to the Iowa, though I do not quite know why. America meant to be very active, however, and Commodore

Schley, with his flying squadron, which had been waiting like a couched lion at Hampton Roads, was dispatched in all haste to Key West.

Here it would meet Sampson, who was bound northward and west for the same rendezvous.

Teddy McCoy was on board Schley's own flagship, the Brooklyn, and this with the Massachusetts, and Texas, along with the Scorpion got first into Key West. But in dashed Sampson on the eighteenth in a terrible hurry—the New York first.

Schley was coaled and so little time was there, that Desmond could not get aboard the Brooklyn to see his dear friend Ted. As they passed near, however, he waved his hand to the brave young fellow and received a friendly signal in return.

Off went Schley, bound for Cienfuegos, expecting to find the fleet of the warlike Don there.

So quickly had the coaling been got over, Sampson in the New York and the rest of the fleet departed on the 21st of May. The Iowa had gone on before to join Schley, and Sampson was going to circumnavigate Cuba, and it would be strange indeed, he told his flag-lieutenant, if they did not catch Cervera.

"If," he added, somewhat dolefully, "Commodore Schley doesn't smash him before we can get in an oar."

By this time the American-Spanish war was "fairly on" as Beaver phrased it, and so far it had

all gone against the Dons, not only in the West Indies, but in the far Philippines.

But great things were still being prophesied for Admiral Cervera at home in his own country, and hopes were heaped high on his broad, brave old shoulders. But he lacked the dash and vim or go of sailors even in the time when Drake used to destroy their fleets on sight. Whatever an admiral's fleet may be, movement and brilliant action are as much needed now as in the days of old. Cervera lacked these qualities. He wasn't the man to hurry, and "mañana" (to-morrow) seemed to be his motto.

There is just one excuse to be made for him. He found himself rather hard up for want of coal and found it very difficult indeed to get any.

Had Spain been quite ready for war it might have altered matters slightly—by delaying the *dénouement*.

"Spain should have had coaling stations on certain islands," I have heard landsmen say.

O yes, most assuredly, and what a truly excellent thing this would have been for America. Would she not have helped herself liberally—and had no bill to pay either?

"Just *debit* this to Spain," Sampson or Schley would have told the governor of such a station, after he had cleared it quite out.

For America was playing a lovely game. Chess wasn't in it.

But at last, acting as policemen say, on in-

formation received, Schley made up his mind to leave Cienfuegos and sail directly for Santiago de Cuba, and there, if he should find the Don—old Cervera—to bottle him up.

Schley arrived off here on the twenty-seventh, I think, and immediately proceeded to place his ships in a line parallel to the mouth of the bay.

The bay of Santiago is a very beautiful one, not more than six miles long and about two wide. It is in reality, however, not a bay at all, but a gulf or sea-lock. A bay, speaking with geographical accuracy, has a wide opening. Santiago is entered by a channel hardly broad enough to permit two ships to get in abreast. This opening is guarded on the east side by an old fort, Morro Castle, with big guns, situated high on the hill; on the west were newly-built batteries, armed with modern artillery. In fact, taken as a whole, Santiago bay is shaped somewhat like a Florence oil flask, and if you sailed in through the neck of the bay, you would come to a little island—Cayo Smith, or Smith's rock—which the Spaniards had armed well, and Blanco fort is much farther up and nearer to the city itself, which latter lies at the top of the gulf, on the right-hand side.

It was fated then, that in and around Santiago bay and on shore the war should, for the most part, rage and rage till the welcome close. The greatest and bravest deeds of the world's naval history would also be enacted here.

We ought therefore to know a little more about the town itself than Desmond's adventures herein gave us.

It, in one sense, bears the same relation to Cuba that Glasgow does to Great Britain. It is the second city of the empire. The relationship ends just there, however, and it would be difficult indeed to find any city in the world much more unlike Glasgow, unless it be Zanzibar, and I have lived in both.

Before the war and the rebellion—had you steamed up the bay and dropped your anchor off Santiago—you would have soon found the vessel quite surrounded by a crowd of boats loaded up with Cuban niggers and Spanish, with no clothes on them worth mentioning, but jabbering, shouting, squabbling and squalling as they offered their wares for sale. Very cheap everything is, and the fruit and flowers which they know that Americans and British love so dearly, are especially delectable.

It is best to have breakfast before landing in Santiago, for Yellow Jack is ever on the outlook for fresh blood to pollute, and fresh victims to destroy. He hides among the poor overburdened brutes of oxen that all day long in the broiling heat and unsavoury odours of the shore, toil with rings in their noses at dragging drays, timber-laden, into the shallow water, where boats meet them to load up for the ships in the offing. And Yellow Jack lurks also in the corners of many a wretched, tumble-

down shanty, and in the fearfully filthy lanes that without any such thing as a side-walk, do duty as streets. And he floats in the dust that rises under the feet of the population or in wet weather swims in the pools and hollows of the roads. But Jack, I know from experience, keeps clear of young fellows who have had a soul-and-nerve strengthening bath in the morning, followed by an excellent and substantial breakfast.

Well, once safely on shore, you will find much that is new, much that is droll, but hardly a sign of modern civilisation.

Yet behold! here is a carriage waiting for you. It is called a volante or flier. You may be inclined to call it a buggy or hansom even, if you want to feel grand. Two wheels, two shafts, two dispirited nags tandem-fashion, and on the front a wee "de'il" in a crimson or orange jacket and wearing spurs of a brutally punishing kind that as he whoops he digs into his nag and away you jolt. Into holes and out of holes, choked with dust or bespattered with mud, up the hill, up, up and away.

Everything is so droll that you hardly mind the inconvenience, and if you do want to make a purchase at a morsel of a shop, the proprietor will bring all his wares out to display them before you, if you so choose.

If you happen to reach the top of the hill safely, you will take a rest as you gaze below on the queer roofs of the city, far down beneath your feet. Then,

having nothing particular to do, and plenty of time to do it in, you have a stroll in and around the old Cathedral.

This is as droll as anything else, because when you enter you find no seats and if, after the jolting you received in that volante, you want to rest in the cool, why down you have got to squat on the marble deck, unless you care to take off your jacket and sit on that.

Not far off, you may find alongside you Spanish men-o'-war sailors in their straw hats, jackets of blue, and canvas trowsers, swaggering and saucy and talking English perhaps to Englishmen or Italian to Italian seamen. Soldiers also you will meet everywhere. Swarthy, small, lithe, but horridly ugly.

Or you may have luncheon at a restaurant; savoury, but not over-nice, and there seems to be a suspicion of garlic in every dish.

The bells appear to be ringing from here, there and everywhere all day long, while priests counting their beads and nuns in deathlike black, go scurrying hither and thither on their errands of mercy. And everywhere, too, you see young fellows squatting, card-playing and gambling on street-corners.

Yonder, high on the hill is the prison. Ah! dark indeed and terrible is life in there, and it needs but a word or a complaint from a neighbour, whether truthful or not, to clap a man into the dungeons of this awful bastille. A London burglar would find a

way to free himself in a few hours, but the poor Cuban does not or cannot, and, worse fortune! he may be forgotten. He may have been put in for a short sentence, but no reliable records being kept this may extend to a "lifer."

The soldiers at military mess would amuse you, so gay, so saucy and so swagger do they look.

The cows are driven from door to door, or into the courtyards to be milked, so adulteration is unknown.

You will find the best houses, at all events, built round courtyards, and some of these latter are very beautiful and filled with rockeries, ferns, palms, flowers and fountains.

In the evenings, however, the city becomes very gay, and if you are at all curious you can see Cuban and Spanish domestic life without stint, for the open fronts afford you a peep right inside the houses.

The girls you notice on the brilliantly lighted plaza listening to the band are—many of them—very pretty and piquant, and I may finish this imperfect description by saying that if Santiago had better sanitary arrangements and therefore fewer awful heart-sickening odours, there would be a good deal of romance about it.

The population, making a rough guess, would be about 70,000 before the war.

The hills and mountains behind and on each side abound in mineral wealth, and now that the Amer-

icans have it—I am writing these lines in 1899—this will speedily be developed.

Tumble-down Santiago will become a thing of the past, handsome streets, quays, plazas and squares will take the place of dirty, grubby lanes, and Yellow Jack himself, will have to try to find quarters somewhere else.

CHAPTER X

"The first scrimmage on Cuban soil"

"We've all got board of the Gussie again,
And over the water fly fleet.
Well I'm rammed if I like it, because, don't you see,
The Spaniels will call it 'defeat.'"—*Jack's Lament.*

THE bold Bonito, as those on board Adeane's yacht always called her, was lying at or near Tampa, one Thursday morning in May, and Father McDowney with our friend Dr. Ramsay were walking rapidly up and down under the awning waiting till the gong roared out that should summon them to breakfast.

The sun was not very high above the horizon yet, so the real heat of the day hadn't yet begun. But there was real heat in that Irish priest's brave heart, nevertheless.

"And why don't you go?" said Ramsay, at last, stopping suddenly and confronting McDowney. "We don't want to lose you, mind, but Adeane is such a brick, he would not mind letting you have a holiday. Well, Colonel Dorset is also a kindly-faced man and I'm sure you would soon get his consent."

"Bedad! then I'll think of it!"

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"There isn't much time; the expedition sails to-night and finally from Key West to-morrow."

"What! on a Friday? I'll not go. Sure nothing but ill-luck would follow us."

"Don't be superstitious, father. If the Yankees are going to be worsted won't there be some wounded and dying, and wouldn't they be glad of your holy comfort?"

"True, true."

Aileen herself, looking prettier than ever, now came on deck for a romp with Charlie and Cheese, and there was half an hour of as genuine fun as anyone could wish to see.

Then breakfast and afterward an interview with Captain Adeane, and finally an interview with Dorset were obtained.

Dorset was very busy and everything was just about ready for the start. But he had time to welcome Father McDowney and bid him do as he pleased, and make himself at home.

The decks were crammed with soldiers. The decks of the *Gussie*, I mean. Not a warlike name. Not a morsel of romance about it. She was an old-fashioned paddler, and one shell between wind and water would have made her acquainted with Davy Jones' locker.

But she was off on a bold mission.

In Scotland, early on New Year's day morning, the first person who arrives from any distance at a farm or mansion, is called first foot. If he is a

good fellow he will bring luck to the place, for all the year around; if not so good, evil or death may follow his visit.

Well, the expedition now sailing was to be "first foot," in a manner of speaking, to Cuba and the Cubans. She was going to land soldiers there to assist the insurgents to make it hot for the Dons and she carried large stores of arms and ammunition. With the business end of the rifles it was hoped the Spanish soldiers would soon form an acquaintanceship though not of a lasting character.

Moreover the gallant Gussie had about £1,000,000 on board to assist the downtrodden Cubans.

As the paddler passed the Bonito the rigging was manned—even Aileen being among the rest, waving her straw hat, while her long, dark hair floated out on the breeze.

They could see the priest on the paddle-box. A man held Charlie up to see him also, and the poor dog barked till he was hoarser than usual.

But what ringing cheers were given and returned, to be sure! They were heart-stirring. So much so that poor little Aileen was crying and had to pretend to be cuddling down low over Charlie to hide her tears from the doctor. But he carried her aft and did his best to comfort her, though she cried a little and said she felt sure she should never, *never* see dear old Father McDowney any more.

But you and I, reader, must leave the Bonito and follow the expedition.

As arranged, luck or not luck, the Gussie, with the brave souls on board her and the one Gatling gun, sailed on Friday evening, escorted by the "Manning," and steamed right down South Havana way.

Along the coast here a warship or gunboat called the "Wasp" was cruising, and she also gave the Gussie a convoy westward from Havana.

From the bridge along the coast of Pinar del Rio, which they hugged despite the fact that Spaniards took pot shots at them, they could see many signs of the insurrectionary war, and the devastating policy of the Dons, fields laid waste by fire, roofless cottages and burned mills.

It was evident enough to all hands that the Gussie's movements were being well watched and her intentions suspected.

They saw many cavalry on shore, riding recklessly along a broad red road over a rugged country with cliffs and hills, moving inland, and rising skyward till they joined a range of lofty forest-clad mountains.

They reached Arlolitos cape at last, however, and here, with their guides, they determined to land their braves,—likewise the "brass."

Two great boats were called away, and with a farewell cheer, off they dashed on their daring enterprise. A long line of breaking water was roaring and tumbling inshore on a coral reef, but the boats rushed the gap, Captain O'Connel dashing on first.

Lieutenant Crafton, however, was, I believe, the real "first foot," the other boat's crew landing some distance to the west of the point.

The invaders had hardly expected resistance, but skirmishers were thrown out and disappeared in the jungle, then firing was heard, and meanwhile a company of guerillas suddenly appeared and attacked those that remained. They had a warm welcome, and four fell dead and the rest beat a hasty and panic-stricken retreat.

Colonel Dorsat considered the position very critical, and, leaving his expedition to show a bold front if attacked, went back in his boat to the Gussie, apprising also the Wasp and the Manning of the danger.

Back now to the shore.

The vessels opened a rapid fire, and, aided by the troops and the one Gatling gun, soon cleared the jungle. The brave Cuban scouts landed—swam on shore with their horses, in fact—and after disappearing in the bush, commenced their terribly dangerous journey inland toward the mountains where was the camp of a Cuban insurgent.

The boats were now recalled, and next day the Gussie, with her convoys, started for Baracoa.

Many strange incidents and adventures fell to the lot of the Gussie, only one of which need be mentioned here. This was the landing of a Cuban scout, called Ambrosito, on the Matanzas coast, and his mission was to carry word to the insurgents

among yonder hills, and to tell them of the arrival of help.

Ambrosito did not like the honour.

He was too stout, he said, to crawl for miles through the grass on his stomach; the bush was alive with the accursed spiders of Spanish soldiers. He had no great desire to die and be turned inside out.

But the man determined at last to risk his life, and was landed from the Manning.

On his first refusal, Father McDowney had sprung forward and bravely offered his services.

"I'll go, colonel," he cried. "I'll go and shame this cowardly Cuban."

"No, you shall not," said Ambrosito. "What! is it that *you*, holy father, should die for a creature like me? No, no, no."

The Gussie steamed about all night, and lo! next morning back came the scout, with a terrible story.

"All the Spaniards in Cuba are in the grass, their lights flashing like fire-flies, so here I am—thank our Heavenly Father—safe and sound."

And so this daring little expedition proved a failure after all.

The priest didn't see any fighting, and neither the stores nor specie could be landed without falling into the hands of the enemy.

The Dons recorded this as a great battle and repulse of the Americanos, with ever so much slaughter, and there were rejoicings in Madrid accordingly.

So back again northwards over the blue and sparkling sea went the Gussie, and in due time reached Key West.

"Back again," were the very words Father McDowney uttered when, a few days later, he scrambled up the side of the Bonito and stood on deck, Charlie Chat scolding him in a series of hoarse barks, and Aileen clinging to his hand while she danced for joy.

"Back again, Captain Adeane, with my finger in my mouth!"

CHAPTER XI

Hobson's Choice

"And there were giants in those days."

—*Holy Writ.*

" And who shall place a limit to the giant's unchained strength, or curb his swiftness in the forward race."

—*Bryant.*

YES, there were giants in Biblical times, and there are giants still. I do not refer to your tall and probably athletic men, but to giants in mental capacity, in pluck and in courage. And it is war that always lifts men like these high above their comrades' heads, and far out of their modest obscurity. I could write a whole book on the doings of heroes of this kind, and a dashing, thrilling one it would undoubtedly be.

I have no such intention this year, at all events; still I should be doing less than my duty did I not mention one or two men connected with the American Navy about Santiago, and this brief epitome of the war for humanity's sake, would hardly be complete without such record.

I must tell you right away then that I consider Schley behaved like a moral giant and a hero. He had already ascertained the strength of the bottled

up Cervera, but those fortifications worried him a little, and so on the last day of May, he bravely stood in toward the entrance to the gulf with the Iowa and the Massachusetts battle-ships, and with a cruiser called the New Orleans.

They found the Cristobal Colon—a Don's man-o'-war—not more than a mile from Morro fort, and fired at her, without perhaps doing much harm except frightening the enemy.

He stood, on the next round, even closer in, and proudly defied the forts, but drew their fire. This is what he wanted to do, and as they poured their shot and shell on or toward him, he stood coolly by the fore turret. He could thus count six forts in all, and moreover, satisfied himself that Cervera was indeed safely bottled up. Then he quietly withdrew.

This was of course another great victory for the Dons, and Madrid newspapers had wonderful headings as before.

ATTEMPT TO ENTER SANTIAGO.

AWFUL CANNONADE OF THE FORTS.

INTREPIDITY OF THE SPANISH GUNNERS.

AMERICAN FLEET BADLY DAMAGED AND
DRIVEN OFF.

BRAVE DEEDS BY TWO TORPEDO BOATS.

This latter heading bore reference to two belonging to the Dons, that at midnight rushed out from

the passage, and made a really bold attempt to sink the Texas. But they were heard. Yankee sentries have quick ears. The search-lights were turned on, and a shower of iron hail from the rapid firers made the Spanish torpedists sick and sorry they had come.

Should I not include Colonel Dorsat of the Gussie, in my little list of giants? I think I may, for he was not satisfied with the Gussie expedition already mentioned, and thought he would like to try again. This time, the steamer Florida, with 100 American troops and 300 brave Cubans, started for Point Banes, and though two gunboats were not far away, did succeed in landing the soldiers, the stores and the ammunition, assisted by not only the insurgents, but by hundreds of hungry Pacificos.

Bravo, good Dorsat. I want my boy readers to know and to love such daring men as you!

But I think that the deed done by Hobson and his gallant comrades—chosen by himself mind—far eclipses anything else that occurred during this short but terrible war.

I must tell the story in the simplest language, and part of it I promise shall be an epitome of the hero's own account.

The Spanish fleet then was bottled in the bay, *but* there was no cork in that bottle, and from its neck, as Admiral Sampson, who with the New York, the Oregon and Mayflower, had arrived on June 1st, and taken the whole command, said tor-

pedo boats would be constantly coming out and annoying the great American fleet. Perhaps even Cervera himself would get away.

Sampson and Schley felt sure enough they could make short work with the Don's fleet if it did appear, but would it not be better to "catch 'em alive" and add them to the American navy.

Then arose the hero Hobson. He came forward modestly, with his heart on his sleeve and his life in his hand. "Give me the collier Merrimac, yonder," he said, "with a few brave fellows, and I will sink her across the exit from the bay, and no more will be heard about Cervera till he comes to place his sword in your hands, sir."

It was with considerable reluctance that Sampson at last consented.

Volunteers were called for. Why, the whole navy would have gone with Hobson, our brave young Ted amongst them. But he did not have the luck, and Hobson's choice fell upon Dan Montague, master-at-arms, of the New York; Charette, a gunner's mate; a coxswain of the Iowa, and four of the crew of the collier Merrimac, Deignan, Phillips and Kelly.

It was on a dark morning—the 3rd of June betwixt two and three A. M., that the Merrimac left the fleet and steered straight for the mouth of the gulf, soon disappearing under the still denser darkness of the mountain shadows.

"Shall we ever see the brave young fellows

again?" This was the question uppermost I believe in the minds of all.

Ted McCoy was greatly disappointed that he had not been permitted to go.

But shortly before the Merrimac left, a man older than himself and quite a friend, had touched him on the sleeve.

"Teddy!" he said, quietly.

"That's me," said Teddy. "Hallo, Harry, is it yourself?"

"Yes," was the reply, "and I'm going on the Merrimac. I want to have something to tell my sweetheart when I go home."

"But you haven't been chosen, Harry."

"No, I'll slip over the side and stow away. Come."

The temptation was great, but Ted managed to resist it.

"Don't ask me again, Harry Clausen; I'd fall, and my fall would vex my good friend Commodore Schley. Mind I don't set up for a plaster saint, but I can't and will not go with you!"

"Then good-bye, Ted, we may never meet again!"

"Good-bye, bless you."

And Clausen really went as a stowaway. Soon after the Merrimac got to the entrance, a tremendous fire was opened from the forts, and the marvel is that the collier was not sunk at once.

A launch had followed her and saw torpedoes exploded. Powell, her commander, lay in the

shadow of the rocks till the crimson sun shone over the eastern hills and forests; then he could see the spars of the Merrimac just appearing above water.

Hobson had intended to sink her by means of torpedoes on board exploded by touching a button. They were all to leap at once overboard and swim to the dinghy attached by a long rope to the stern.

The men were stripped for swimming, and all was ready, but lo! at the last moment it was found that the dinghy was wrecked and the rudder shot away so that the vessel could not be laid across the channel.

Hobson found, however, an old catamaran on the deck and this was attached to the taffrail by a long rope so that it should not sink with the ship.

Fancy if you can, reader, doing all this under the continued fire of the forts and explosion of torpedoes, the glare of the flashing guns lighting up the water and rendering the Merrimac and its dare-die crew quite visible.

And now the men were ordered to spring overboard at once. A brief spell was granted them to swim away from the ship or the suction would have taken them down.

Then brave Hobson touched the button and sprang into the sea.

That the lieutenant had a narrow escape it may well be seen, for the eddie sucked him back in spite of all his efforts, but now, to use his own words, "I turned and struck out for the catamaran or

float which I could see dimly bobbing up and down over the sunken hull."

(The reader will remember that this catamaran—a species of raft made of cross beams or logs, in other words a floating grating—was fast by a long rope to the sunken ship.)

"The Merrimac's masts," he goes on, "were plainly visible and I could see the heads of my seven men as they followed my example and made for the float also." (Where was the poor stow-away? Gone down with the wreck?) "We had of course expected that the Spaniards would investigate the wreck, but we had no idea that they would be at it so quickly as they were. Before we reached the float several boats rounded the bluff from the inside of the harbour. They had officers on board and several armed marines, and they searched the passage continuing to row backward and forward till morning. It was really only by good luck that we got to the float at all and we had hardly concealed ourselves when a boat with quite a large party was close beside us."

(The raft did not lie flat on the water. It verily looked as if Providence had interfered to save those poor brave fellows. *Fortuna favet fortibus* isn't always the truest of mottoes to adopt, reader, but it comes pretty nigh to the truth as often as not. The raft's rope was short, so it did not swing flat but was tilted and this allowed the men to crawl beneath and thus hide themselves with their heads

out of the water and hanging on to the bars of the raft above. Fancy, if you can, what a position to be in all throughout those dark and dreary morning hours.)

"None of us," says Hobson, "expected to get out of the affair alive, but evidently the Spaniards never thought of examining this half-sunken catamaran, though they came within a cable's length of us every few minutes all night long."

(No doubt, in the excitement of what they considered a victory—believing that it was their own fire which had sunk this ship—they would have murdered the poor fellows at once had they discovered them. But there was still that

". . . . Sweet little cherub that sits up aloft
To keep watch for the life of poor Jack.")

"We were afraid to speak above a whisper. . . . After we had been here an hour or two the water began to grow cold and my fingers ached where the wood was pressing into them.

"The clouds now blew over and we could, in the starlight, see the boats distinctly and hear the splashing of the oars.

"Then our teeth began to chatter, and I was in constant dread that the Dons might hear even this when they came close up to us.

"One of my men at last disobeyed orders and started to swim on shore, and I had to call him back.

"I thought my voice would assuredly be heard. It was not, and the boats swept away into the shadow of the hills once more.

"At last daylight began to appear and now a boat, full of officers and armed marines came from behind a cliff. I understood from their talking that they came from the fleet and was pleased, for I have far greater faith in a sailor than in a soldier.

"Then I hailed her.

"The marines stood by to fire at the word of command!" (But superstition must have affected them, and the dread of the unknown, which is so terrible a factor in the religions of half-civilised countries, for they backed off quite a quarter of a mile. It was the voice of the drowned they had heard assuredly!)

Continuing his narrative, brave Hobson tells us that he now launched forth breast and side stroke for that boat, and the men waited—for death or delivery. After hailing once more and shouting as well as his quavering voice would permit, that he had seven men to surrender, Hobson was hauled on board by Cervera himself.

"My treatment by the naval officers and that of my men was courteous all the time we were prisoners."

Well, good wine needs no bush to make it effervesce, nor does a good and true story like that of Hobson need any comment of mine to cause its better appreciation.

It is due, however, to Cervera and the Spaniards as a brave though old-fashioned nation, to say that the admiral treated his prisoners well, telling them that since the days of ancient Rome no bolder deed had ever been done. Moreover he sent Captain Ovideo with a flag of truce to the New York to say that the admiral of the Spanish fleet was most profoundly impressed with the brilliant courage of the men who sank the Merrimac, that they were alive and bar two slightly injured, were in good health and well cared for.

Schley afterward, while talking to a press correspondent in the hearing of his men, pointed toward Morro Castle where the prisoners were, and with never a sigh of braggadocio in his calm voice, said, "History does not record an act of finer heroism than that performed by the gallant men who are prisoners over yonder. They went into the very jaws of death. It was Balaklava over again without the means of defence that the Light Brigade possessed, for Hobson led a forlorn hope without the means to cut himself out. His name will live so long as the heroes of this world are remembered!"

"Amen!"

And these prisoners saw all the terrible bombardment that followed. That in itself would make a story well worth reading or listening to.

Hobson, I may tell you, comes from a long line of illustrious ancestors, who were forever foremost

during peace or during red-handed war. I, myself, am not much of a believer in heredity, and love most dearly the boy who can cut out his own career, who can open the world with his sword as if it were an oyster. This is the lad for me!

But as a boy Dick Hobson was quiet, thoughtful, yet brave even to intrepidity.

God send Britain and America many Hobsons on the day of battle and time of need.

Some snivelling writer says that it is "opportunity that makes the man."

No, boys, no. The man is made before, and all that opportunity can do is to give him an inning. He'll make his own score.

CHAPTER XII

With Roosevelt's Rough Riders—Dess and Beaver

"The bugle call has sounded: it is 'forward march!' and then
The shouting of the captains, and the cheering of the men,
The storming of the ramparts—the victory—the retreat
While April rains fall crimson on hills and valley sweet.

"The bugle call has sounded, and forth they rush to fight;
But 'neath the stars—the flag's red bars—are faces cold and white,
And some shall come in glory;—but hearts in vain shall beat
Through long, long years of loneliness for unreturning feet."

—*Anon.*

THE landing of the volunteers at Siboney and the skirmishes and fights they had on hills, in bush and in forest, form a page of history in themselves, which I trust many boys will turn to and read with avidity. Fiction is good and makes, in my opinion, an excellent background on which to paint historical facts—as witness the stories of my great ancestor, Sir Walter Scott—but there are lads—and many more may they be—who prefer their facts all undiluted. To them I commend the history of the American-Spanish war, which, by the way, will not be completed until complete order is restored to distracted and bewildered Luzon in the far Philippines.

Well, now, though I, myself naturally love ships

and sailors, I must confess to having a penchant for deeds of daring done on shore, especially for those of horsemen.

I have given some of those connected with the doings of the Cubans, cowboys who were really the first rough riders who showed the effete Dons what dash and pluck—allied with good physique—could do.

But Roosevelt's horse—as horse, were not really engaged—Roosevelt and his merry men were, though.

The enemy, after the fighting at Siboney, retreated on a place called Sevilla (pronounce Say-veel-ya).

Siboney is less than twenty miles from Santiago—the Santiago—and the voyage of the troops, conveyed so carefully to this place, by men-of-war, was indeed a romantic one.

The landing and fighting afterward was no fun, I can assure you. General Shafter sent for the Red Cross people—veritable saints are these in war—to come up with all speed.

At Siboney it was raining or drizzling hard, when these good souls arrived, and it was night.

The wounded lay in the trenches, but could hardly be cared for, not even in the matter of food, because wet brushwood makes but a poor fire.

When these were carried in, it is said that their condition was sad and terrible. Their clothes were soaked with blood and rain and caked with mud

and filth; and without shelter, with few surgeons, and little clothing, moaning and groaning they lay—in rows on the wet soil—while soup was being prepared. “Moaning and groaning,” I say, but it was pain that forced such expressions from them, especially when they dosed off a bit. While wide awake there was ne’er a murmur of impatience, yet many wanted much to know how their comrades in the front were getting on.

Well, the rough riders, *minus* their horses were following up the foe, while the insurgent Cubans, rifles in hand, watched every road among the hills, prepared to give the Dons a hot breakfast as soon as their unkempt heads appeared.

There were two roads, but both were watched. One of these led over the hills, another along the base, and the rough riders took the steepest. They were heavily equipped and carried enough cartridges to treat the Dons to a taste of that death which for years they had been dealing out so liberally to brave men, helpless women and innocent babes.

So great was the heat and the toil that during the day we find that those American western athletes emptied their canteens and threw away everything save rifles and cartridges.

How he had managed to get there I cannot quite say—though I can guess—Father McDowney himself, with sword and rifle, nothing sacerdotal about him except that broad-brimmed hat, was in the

front ranks of the rough riders, or rather, I should say, the first files, for so bad was the bush-lined path that the brave fellows had to march mostly in a string.

They found the Spaniards five miles up, and back, and then the fighting began in earnest.

But this was an ambush, and men and officers began to fall dead or wounded in all directions.

There never was a thought of retreating, however. A charge alone could save life and honour.

Roosevelt led the way in open order, and Wood, with Brodie, led on the other side, but Wood soon fell, and so, too, did McClintock.

There was a blockhouse up yonder, and the American cowboys meant to have it, no matter what price they should have to pay.

Up came reserves, and with shout and cheer, the honest Irish priest yelling with the best—on they dashed.

“God and our right!” cried McDowney.

“Remember the Maine, boys.”

Such is only a specimen of the battle cries, but at close quarters all was grim fighting and hardly a battle cry was heard.

For two whole hours this battle against an all-but unseen foe raged on, both on the hill and at the foot, with Young's corps.

Then once more *fortuna favet fortibus* and the enemy retreats leaving their dead and wounded in the bush.

The coolness and intrepidity of the invaders, all throughout this hard-fought battle, is beyond praise, and it is no wonder that the Dons said afterward that it was not men they had been fighting, but—devils incarnate.

Commenting on this battle, General Wheeler reported that it inspired the American troops and rendered the enemy almost hopeless. It also gave them the beautiful, well-watered country where they speedily formed encampments within sight of Santiago, enabling them to make reconnaissances close up to its very walls.

As for our hero, Father McDowney, the best I can say, is this, he was just as busy assisting the doctors after the battle and whispering words of comfort to the dying, as he had been brave and intrepid while under fire.

* * * * *

Well, this plucky fight on what an Aberdeen-American called "The braes abeen Siboney," led or cleared the way to a bigger battle—namely, that of Santiago.

And to this well-contested field I must now ask the reader to accompany me.

First to the fleets, however, that lie yonder in terrible array, ready for any emergency, their crews longing to belch fire and death on the devoted city, and on the Spanish fleet, should it dare to attempt an exit.

Look beyond them, and as we leave the shores of Cuba with their coral sands, we can see on the distant horizon smoke rising and trailing along the blue sea.

That is Captain Adeane's yacht, the brave Bonito. Many a little service she has been enabled to perform for the fleet, and now he is bound back to the New York with messages from Key West which I care not here to divulge.

Only let me tell you one thing: the millionaire's son, our fiery hero, Desmond, has asked his admiral for a furlough.

The good old sailor looks at him with some degree of mute surprise, but a smile breaks over his face as he answers:

"What! a furlough in front of the foe!"

"Ah! but, sir," says Dess, "I want to spend the few days you allow me, on shore, and much *nearer* to the front of the foe.

"Kindly remember, admiral, that I have a *ven-detta* to seek and work out against those shirtless Dons. They burnt our hacienda and they slew my good friend Hodson."

"Go—go—lad."

"And may I take our Beaver with us?"

"Well—yes again. I daresay his absence won't cause our ships to sink."

When Dess and Beaver were pulled off to the Bonito and stood on the quarter-deck, they received a right hearty welcome indeed, from all hands.

For the men crowded on deck and gave three roaring, rattling cheers.

That evening, Beaver, who was nothing unless a cheeky young sailor, drew Dess aside.

"I'm in love," he said, "and I don't mind telling *you*."

"In love, Beaver boy?"

"I'm not a boy now. I was a boy yesterday, but to-day I am a *man*."

"Well I only hope that Charlie Chat reciprocates your affection. It is the bulldog, of course?"

"Come down out of the top will you? You know well enough it is Aileen, your sweetly charming sister, I mean."

"Sweetly charming sister. Eh. Ha! I daresay she is all right as regards looks. Have you told her?"

"Oh no, I wouldn't dare. Perhaps my looks have betrayed me!"

"Well, Beaver, old *man*, don't let them and don't say a word to her or any other soul, for to tell *you* the honest truth, her affections, if she ain't too young to have any, belong to another."

"And who may I ask is——"

"O, I'll tell you that too: he is a warrant officer on the Brooklyn and only just promoted from able-seaman."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Beaver, right heartily, "ha! ha! ha! what a prodigious joke! A millionaire's daughter in love with an ordinary blue-

jacket. Shake, Dess! You always were fond of fun, *but* you have given me hope. I'm going to write to my mother, and just tell her what is likely to happen when the cruel war is over."

"Likely or unlikely, we'll always be friends, won't we, Beaver?"

"Till cold death puts a finger in the pie."

The young fellows shook hands, but Desmond had reason to remember those words not long after.

* * * * *

This evening and several more to follow were spent pleasantly enough on board the Bonito. To say nothing of the days.

Charlie Chat and Cheese had never felt in finer form, and their gambols made all hands laugh, especially Beaver.

But this brave young sailor's tune changed when Charlie, looking awfully full of business, came dragging the apparently lifeless Cheese by her sonsy tail toward the quarter-deck.

"O dear," he cried, "I am indeed sorry and shocked; I wish this hadn't— O! Look!"

He might well exclaim, "O! Look!" for at the very moment his sympathies were most deeply stirred, up sprang the dead cat and giving Charlie a droll little pat on his great jowl, sprang nimbly on to the capstan, leaving Charlie on deck to take it out in barking.

Beaver could sing a good song and did, and as Burns hath it,

“The nichts drave on wi’ sangs and clatter ——”

But toward Beaver, though she treated him most kindly, for, was he not one of her brother’s dearest friends?—Aileen was just a trifle reserved.

Had she any suspicion as to the real nature of his feelings? Who can fathom a girl’s thoughts or measure her mental capacity for analysis and intuition.

The day of days came at last however, and Dess bidding his father and Aileen an affectionate farewell, to say nothing of the doctor who was envious because he could not accompany them, left the Bonito with his friend to join the army corps under General Shafter.

CHAPTER XIII

A Terrible Battle—Roosevelt on the Heights of San Juan—Strange Adventures

“Braver deeds were never done,
Braver field was never won,
Braver swords were never wet,
With life’s red tide where heroes met.”—*Almer*.

IN order to give anything like a complete description of a battle and siege such as that of Santiago I should require to have complete descriptions of what they saw and endured from a dozen soldier men at least.

And if I had, I doubt if any two stories would be in any degree alike.

I must follow my heroes the best way I can. And that on the morning of the advance, was a very helter-skelter one, indeed.

But during the first landing of the troops in the wild and romantic little bay of Baiquiro, there were men, who, as they gazed ahead of them at the rugged mountains and tree-clad glens, sat dumb with amazement at the beauty of the scenery.

Others made no attempt to conceal that they were far from easy in their minds.

"Hans!" said one, "have we to climb yonder hills in front of an enemy?"

"Ay, don't you like it?"

"I guess I don't. Do you?"

"No," replied the other with beautiful candour. "I reckon I'm just about as near being in a blue pink as ever I was in my life."

"Shouldn't wonder if I turned and ran at the first rattle from the bush," said a third soldier.

"Ha! ha! ha!" and all laughed in merry unison. "Blanked if our joints ain't all oiled with the same feather."

Yet those very men when on the field of Santiago behaved with splendid courage.

One of them—the last speaker—had the sleeve of his coat ripped up with a Mauser bullet and his arm pierced through the triceps.

Down he rolled, and couldn't fight again, but when the surgeon saw to his scratch, as the man called it, after he had lain bleeding for over an hour, he had a mouthful of coffee with brandy or old rye in it and nobly crawled back to assist in attending to the fellow-men in the rear.

That was a brave deed which Lieutenant Blue—a navy man and therefore *true* blue—performed! He went scouting all alone, and did a journey of over sixty miles round the city, sometimes being close up to the enemy's batteries. From his elevated situation he caught a glorious glimpse of the bay and took back with him the number of the

Spanish fleet, and shipping in general, and told what he had seen of the Dons' and Cubans' fighting.

"Blowed if they didn't seem jolly well afraid of each other," he said. "Well, the Cubans did knock a Spaniel heels over tip now and then, but it seems to me that the bushes suffered more than the insurgents from the fire of the Dons. I wouldn't have been a bush for quite a deal."

"There is never any good, boys," said Father McDowney to Desmond and Beaver on the evening of June 30th, "in thinking of a fight that's all before us. Saving your presence, youngsters, there's no use in shaking hands with the divil at all, at all, until you're right foreninst him. And then it's my foot I'd be giving him.

"Scouts," he added, "have come in to tell us that the enemy have retreated up-hill a bit, and that every accessible part is trenched, that the Dons will never give in, and that it's fighting an unseen foe we'll be. Pooh! what does it matter, so long as we fight him; the ugly face of him won't scare us anyhow. Well, we have biscuit and coffee, beautiful bacon, and cocoanuts and limes, and if any of the two of you be wounded, it's into a charming hospital you'll be carried, and the Red Cross people will treat you as gently as if they were the mothers that bore you.

"Och! it's wishing I had my fiddle here, I am. But roll up in your blankets, boys, for the night's

getting cold, and mind you, *sleep*—an easy thing to do if ye say your prayers. Good-night, and the blessing of the Great Unseen be around you; for it's soon enough you'll be wakened in the morning."

And that indeed was true. For as early as five, after a hasty breakfast the troops were in motion in all directions.

Lawton, it would seem, went on after Capron's battery of artillery. This last was to shell a fort not far from the city. Having reduced this, the orders were for General Chaffee to close in, and Ludlow, who was farther down the hill from the battery, to flank round on Chaffee's left, while Miles' troops kept close to both, and thus they hoped to drive the foe on toward the little town of Caney.

Capron's battery soon played havoc with the fort, and by eight o'clock, despite the desertion of the fortification and the terrible resistance of the Spaniards in trenches, the fight was well begun.

But dearly indeed did the Americans have to pay for even this temporary success.

Yet under shelter of their covered way the Dons fought like demons, while the Yanks fell dead or wounded in all directions.

At twelve o'clock noon it was determined that an assault should take place.

Like the British themselves, the Americans are splendid fellows in a bayonet charge.

Shortly after three o'clock, not only had the covered way become untenable, but Chaffee's braves had left the woods beneath, and were swarming up the hill toward the stone fort on the north of Santiago.

Strangely enough the Spanish standard was shot down about the same time and never more would it float on its proud position. Whether the enemy considered this a bad omen or not, I can not say.

The Dons were now completely surrounded, though they still maintained a stern and terrible resistance. But even at this time in the afternoon it was evident that the Spaniards were being badly beaten, and that soon the Americans, though much worn out, and with their ranks terribly thinned, would be victors; but the city would not fall into their hands for days to come, days of struggle and bloodshed, and toils bravely borne by an army who were really recruits, and who had never faced an angry foe before.

Well, we must leave this portion of the wide and well-fought field of battle where deeds were done and positions stormed which no troops that ever I have seen saving the Scottish Highlanders have even attempted.

I refer to the charge of the rough riders, under brave Roosevelt, who I am told was the only mounted man amongst them.

There has never been a more brilliant charge than that made up the steep hills by those gallant

cowboys of the far West, with the exception perhaps of that of the Gordons of Dargai.

I'm sure that my readers, both British and American, will pardon my saying so, when told that I am a Highlander, and that Gordon is my father's clan.

There were Don-crowded trenches on the top of the hill of San Juan and a fort. Roosevelt meant to take them and he did.

Yes, it cost him dearly, but a real victory invariably does, and we all know that he did not spare himself. He was in front like a hero of the olden time, with bullets whistling around him all the while, but he really seemed to bear a charmed life.

It is hardly credible yet it is true, that even after the capture by the rough riders of San Juan Hill and fort, at the expense of so many brave lives, a few of the leaders or chiefs of the American forces met to consider whether or not they ought to withdraw the troops from the heights. They had been winning, doing nothing but win in fact, and that too against fearful odds, oftentimes really fighting an unseen foe. Probably Shafter was a little tired and depression had followed the excitement. The Spaniards had retreated it is true, but the wounded and dead still dotted the hillsides and the medical and surgical staff were almost worn out. The Spaniards, despite their fierce valour and determined resistance, had retired, doubtless only to return redoubled in strength, for reinforcements to the

number of 5,000 were but a day's journey in their rear. The Americans had no artillery to speak of. Could they therefore hold the positions they had gained? What a sad, sad question! And yet it demanded reply. But to give up any single portion of the ground they had so nobly fought for, and won, might—ay, and would, have such a depressing effect upon the troops that it assuredly would end in panic, and if so in flight, demoralisation and disorganisation of the whole force. Utter annihilation would follow or the American army should have to lay down its arms and submit to be made prisoners.

The night that followed as far as the weather was concerned, was indeed beautiful. The moon shone full over hill and dell, and all around the scenery was like a dream.

But there was but little sleep or dreaming either for the toil-worn Americans and most of the time was put in by relays of men digging trenches.

They worked with heart, however, because the news had spread that Shafter was determined to hang on.

Ah! there was a good deal of the British bulldog about Shafter. He had the hold, who was going to choke him off?

But the Spaniards after all had endured enough in honour's cause and were not sorry when an armistice was entered upon.

The incidents, during this long and tiresome battle—both sad and gay—are far too numerous to

mention. For, from a people like the Americans, you can not separate fun even during fighting, and strange to say the humourous and ludicrous in this world are all too often found in juxtaposition.

But a word or two concerning our own three heroes engaged in this fight around Santiago.

The good Father McDowney seemed really ubiquitous. He had *carte blanche* anyhow. For at one time he might have been seen, sword in hand, in the very thick of the fight, encouraging the men, and even leading them on to glory ; at another time during a lull, he was doing his duty with marvelous zeal or skill among the wounded, and the wounded men blessed him in whispers, and sometimes, alas ! in that blessing the spirit passed away. His strength was enormous for his size, and in his own arms did he bear many a poor fellow to the rear after his wounds had been seen to, or under the trees out of the rays of the blazing sun. Again scudding across the open with the bullets ping-pinging, and zip-zipping around him, he was to be seen hurrying along toward a stream to fill a dozen of the men's canteens with the luke-warm water and return with it, laughing heartily to see how eagerly the soldiers drank, and how much they enjoyed it.

The only thing that did stagger the priest a little was watching the effects of the rapid-firing guns of the Spaniards, how the hail from their invisible muzzles—for no one was to be seen and it was impossible to position those awful instruments of

modern warfare—swept here and there over the field, where men stood closest, mowing them down in little heaps as a farmer's mower at home here may cut thistles or merryman tansies.

Poor McDowney was bending down over a wounded man, when the hail from the rapid-firer came his way. A passing shower. A death squall, for it killed his man among others and all but wounded the priest. I say "all but" advisedly, for marvelous to say, the squall cut not only the tails of his coat off, but every morsel of clothing that covered a very useful portion of his anatomy a little lower down and behind.

The priest naturally put round his left hand. Skin touched skin!

There was no time to waste in useless lamentation, however. He stretched out his dead cavalryman and closed his eyes.

"Sleep, poor soul, sleep," he said, "and it's someone that will be missing you in your far-off western home. Sleep; the winds among the long, long grass and ten thousand murmuring flying things'll sing your lullaby. Sleep, and it's dacintly buried you'll be when all the battle's over, and the Dons have fled."

At this moment another wounded man crawled toward him.

"We sent Jim Jackson with a string o' canteens, but he hasn't returned. The men in the bush up here are mostly sorely off!"

"Get under here," cried the priest, "or it's killed you'll be!"

Then off he ran toward the stream once more. He was astonished though to hear yells of laughter from the men whom he turned his back to, and indeed his figure just then would have made a horse laugh. McDowney was equal to the occasion, however, and off he pulled the wonderful broad-brimmed hat and though it was cut about a bit with bullets, when he clapped it round behind, and held it there, it did very excellent service indeed.

He put his hat on again though, when he reached the stream. No need for false modesty in the presence of death.

And here was Jim half in, half out of the stream, but dead enough. His canteens had been filled and the priest with a tear in his eye, now took them and placed them in a row, ready.

Then he pulled Jim out of the water; his shoulders and head were emersed.

He stretched him out as he had done so many others.

Then, "Jim Jackson mavourneen," he said, "I knew you well in life and it's the kind-hearted boy you ever were. And now rest you lad; I'm going to borrow your trowsers. Ach! there is no need of such garments in the land you're going to. It's with glory and love you'll be clothed entirely."

When Father McDowney returned to the boys,

he wasn't ashamed to face them or to turn his back to them either.

* * * * *

I do not like death scenes myself. So what I now have to tell shall be told in a few words.

Beaver and Desmond had been with the rough riders, and had fought manfully and got safely enough to the fort and trenches.

They were just about to enter when Desmond heard a short quick rap or thud—those who have been in action will know the sound well. He turned quickly round and was just in time to lower his messmate to the ground.

Yes, Beaver was hit.

Mortally wounded! Dess knew that at once from the pallor of his countenance.

He beckoned to a rough rider—a man without a hat, disheveled in hair and wild-looking, his clothes besmeared with blood and clay.

But a kindly heart beat beneath his coarse shirt and though wounded and battle-weary himself, he gladly assisted Desmond to carry his comrade into the trench.

And there they laid him gently down and managed between them to bind up the wound in his chest. And beside him all the remainder of the afternoon Desmond sat. He thought not of food or refreshment. He was still there when the sun was setting red over yonder in the west behind a tree-fringed hilltop.

And when the moon rose and flooded the trenches with its heavenly light, Dess might have been seen, but in tears.

Even the brave may weep.

Yet gently he closed poor Beaver's eyes. The boy had never spoken once since they laid him down. And now—well he would never speak again.

CHAPTER XIV

The Wanderers' return.—“ See the conquering hero comes ! ”

“ The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”—*Gray*.

“ See the conquering hero comes
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums.”—*T. Morel*.

POOR Beaver slept in a soldier's grave.

A few days after Desmond had seen him laid to rest, he had an interview with Roosevelt himself, and begged that he might now be permitted to re-join the fleet.

“ You may go, certainly,” said this kind-hearted and brave rough rider. “ I feel exceedingly sorry that just on the eve of victory you should have been plunged into such deep grief by the loss of your comrade. But do not forget that his was a death that thousands and thousands shall envy him. The brave lad laid down his life for America, the land he loved so dearly. Happy, I say, is he, who like Lochiel

“ Shall, victor, exult or in death be laid low,
With his back to the field and his feet to the foe ;
And leaving in battle no blot on his name,
Look proudly to heaven from the death-bed of ‘ fame ’ ? ”

"Good-bye, lad," he continued, extending his hand which Desmond took reverently in his own—for every boy who is a boy—is a hero-worshipper. "You have my sincerest sympathy. I have marked your own acts of bravery and shall not forget to report them to the right quarter."

"A thousand thanks, sir, and may fortune ever favour you. Good-bye!"

Father McDowney himself accompanied Dess to the beach and in a boat to the New York.

He had to assure his martial comrades, however, that he would return. And they gave the fighting priest a rousing cheer as he departed, throwing in another little one for the plucky young sailor, Dess.

"Well," said the priest, when they were once fairly out of danger, and away from all the sad sights, "let us sit down here and have dinner. Look at that lovely rippling stream; behold the mountains, the woods and forests and the blue and distant sea. Surely this is a country well worth fighting for!"

"And you've seen a bit of real war, haven't you, Dess?" he added.

"And under a hero!" cried Desmond, with eyes that fairly scintillated with enthusiasm.

"Wait till I dig the potatoes," said McDowney, "and I'll tell you a little more about your hero, Roosevelt. Light a fire till I return."

Desmond did as he was told, and by and by back

came the priest, his red handkerchief filled with sweet potatoes and luscious fruit.

The potatoes were placed in the ashes and were soon cooked. Then he opened a kind of haversack he wore knapsack-fashion, and discovered a hunk of broiled bacon and biscuits in abundance.

The two made a hearty meal. "Thank God for that same," said Father McDowney.

"Your friend, Roosevelt," he said now, "is indeed a hero, and never could have been anything else.

"But he began by conquering himself and his passions and everything else. He had a good father, who taught him that idleness is a curse and that the boy who did nothing would come to nothing and have plenty of it, sure, when he swelled and grew into a man.

"Well, did ye ever see a much finer man, Dess, lad?"

"No indeed, father."

"But as a mere boy he was boneless, white-faced, thin and nerveless. He was so weakly that he didn't even play like other lads.

"Well, somebody told him one day that if he did not go in for all kinds of exercise in the open air, he would never be a man at all, only a muff, like what ladies wear—God bless them all—to keep their fingers from the frost. Well, Desmond, you know that a muff is both soft and hollow and sorra a bit of brain has it at all, at all.

"Young Roosevelt examined his mother's muff very carefully one day.

" 'I'm not going to be a thing like that,' he cried. 'I'll make myself a man or die in the attempt.'

"He took now to helping his father with the farm. He knew the truth of the old saying, 'If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well.'

"Hard labour isn't good exercise, however, because it usually lacks the chief virtue—pleasantness. But Roosevelt took to riding, running, swimming and wandering here, there and everywhere among woods and wilds, studying the greatest of all books—bar the Bible, boy—the book of nature.

"No wonder he grew up strong, brave and manly, ay and at Harvard College he came out bright.

"The history of his country he studied, too, and so altogether, instead of developing into a muff and softy, he was at the time he left the university just fit for anything, and a young man fit to lead a debate in the Senate or an army in the field.

"Well, he has been very much in public life. He has been a member of the Legislature; a sturdy, brave and honest politician, and he was even candidate for the mayoralty of New York.

"He became eventually leader of the rough riders, their captain and adored chief, a man whom I have heard many a brave soldier say he would follow him to—well, a worse and a warmer country than Cuba.

"He loved politics, mind you, Dess, but more than

all he loved a free western life and was at heart a real cowboy.

"He got away from the Legislature whenever he could; far, far away, too; westward, to the land of adventure and big game stalking. He built himself a log hut on the banks of the little Missouri, and was never more happy than when rounding up cattle with the cowboys, wearing a red flannel shirt with alligator boots, his lower garments inside them and a broad sombrero hat. You may fancy you see him on horseback rigged out like that, or far over the mountains dreary, or in woods and forests indefatigably following game or even fighting grizzlies.

"This, Desmond, is the merest epitome of his life. But, lad, it is the epitome of the *life of a man*.

"And now we must be going, my brave pupil, for long is the way and dangerous we have to traverse, and yonder sun mustn't blush red till we're both safe on board the New York, and you have reported yourself to Admiral Sampson."

Desmond and Father McDowney had more adventures than one, however, before they got out to the fleet. They were just beginning to think they should have to stay all night in the bush among the fire-flies and the nasty inquisitive creepie-creepies, when they saw an American boat sweep round a corner, with her bows laid seaward.

They shouted aloud and were heard. In a short time the boat was beached and these two war-worn

men—the young and the middle aged—were got on board.

Desmond was delighted to find himself in the stern-sheets of a man-o'-war boat once again, with close beside him, who but young Ginger himself who had been sent on shore on business, and to whom he was just telling his adventures as the boat swept alongside.

Sampson himself came forward to greet Dess and the priest. He had heard of poor Beaver's death. But—it was the fortune of war.

The appearance of Desmond's uniform, or what remained of it, his *tout en ensemble*, in fact, was in no way prepossessing or fetching. But the priest's rig out, covered as it was with clay and blood, with which even his face was besmeared, was ridiculous in the extreme.

His coat without the tails, his short uniform trowsers, far too tight, and threatening to burst every minute; his dangling sword, his knapsack; all and everything were so comical that first the middies, then the men burst into one rattling volley of laughter, that Sampson himself was fain to join.

But when it had become somewhat subdued, the brave admiral took the priest's hat reverently from his head and walking forward a few steps held it up before the middies.

"Look, lads," he said, "at the shot-holes. This is the hat not only of a priest but of as brave a soldier as ever confronted the foe."

There was no more laughing after that, but a ringing cheer went up, repeated again and again in the evening air, that would have done your heart good to have listened to.

Then, as with one impulse, forward rushed the young officers, and before he knew exactly where he was, or what everything meant, Father McDowney was being marched round and round the deck, on the juniors' shoulders, as they sang

"See the conquering hero comes!"

and finally disappeared with him below.

CHAPTER XV

The Men of Steel and Steam!

“And the ship; how she trembles from top to keel—
Though she rates twelve thousand tons!
And her scorched decks leap with a thundering throb
’Neath the roar of her twelve-inch guns!
Dented and tortured and pierced, she stands
The blows on her rigging plates;
Grimy and black she signals back,
To the flags of her fighting mates;
Hear the grinding crash from her armoured prow,
Hear the rattling bolts from the mast?
Young steel flanks of the living ‘Now’
Is Old Ironsides of the ‘Past.’”—*Barnes.*

WHILE the fighting was still in progress around Santiago, great deeds were being done by the American fleet, or at all events had commenced. Admiral Sampson was a thorough fighting, and clever sailor.

But like all brave men, modest to a degree. He wanted no praise for his strenuous efforts in keeping up the blockade.

“That was an easy matter,” he himself tells us, “for the entrance to the bay is narrow and we could get near enough to have made fun for any vessel coming out, if a moon or stars were only visible.

"I found," he continued, "that, owing to her inability to answer helm—indeed it had been damaged by the fire from the forts—brave Hobson was unable to sink the Merrimac broadside on, and so the marvelous courage of himself and his heroes had been useless, for ships could pass the wreck.

"I therefore did my best to keep up the blockade as follows: At night a battle-ship was sent in shore and threw a beam right up the channel which made everything therein as bright as day. Thus even the movements of small boats could be detected. Picket steam launches were also stationed close to the entrance so that nothing could force its way out of the neck of the great bottle undetected and alive.

"Then, when the fighting around Santiago commenced, all the fleet crept closer to the land and another battle-ship, broadside on to the channel, was stationed close to the search-light ship."

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP SEA.

This was precisely the position of Cervera on the ever-to-be-remembered 1st of July.

For, with an enemy on shore and another waiting outside for him, his feelings were not to be envied.

Hobson and his fellow-prisoners could see the bombardment of Santiago itself from their dungeon windows; and for nine hours the fleet poured a tremendous fire of shot and shell far over the heads

of the skulking fleet and into the narrow lanes of the city itself.

Again on the 2d of July, Morro was almost demolished, during a four hours' bombardment.

It was well, indeed, that Sampson let his men rest after this, for the real naval battle took place on the very next day.

Cervera considered the whole situation, and determined to hazard an exit, and though at first he thought of stealing out under cover of the night of July 2d, he put it off until next day.

The Americans had hardly expected his exit then. It was a calm and beautiful Sunday morning—strange, by the way, that so many great battles are fought on this holy day—and what a state of bustle and excitement followed Lieutenant Hodgson's megaphonic shout—"Enemy's fleet coming out!"

This was about ten o'clock A. M., and instantly the Brooklyn cleared for action.

Poor Ted McCoy had been praying for his adopted brother's safety, for he believed he was still on shore, and he only wished that he could be with him.

Commodore Schley, who had been a little expecting the glorious, heart-stirring news, was now at once on his mettle.

Yes, yonder one by one, like some terrible python, the Don's fleet came trailing out of harbour and was welcomed by such a shout as had never before been heard in these waters.

And the excitement was great now, both below and aloft. Even the stokers fought like veritable demons to get up the fires that should send the American ships onward, and in shore at the greatest speed.

And yonder, right easily seen now was the *Infanta Maria Teresa*, over which Cervera's defiant flag was floating or trying to. She led the van, but the *Viscaya* came next, the great *Almirante* and the redoubtable *Cristobal Colon* and several torpedo-boat destroyers.

The *Iowa* was near at hand when fire was opened by Schley, and other ships soon took up the terrible song or joined the rattling chorus.

The *New York* was three miles off shore when the battle began.

Now had the *Dons* slipped out at night, their pilot boats guiding them by the gleams of their enemy's search—a truly beautiful way of turning a foe to good account,—it had been intended that a most terrific and deadly fire should first sink the *Brooklyn*, for she was the speediest Yankee ship of war. They should then trust to showing the rest a clean pair of heels.

When far out of reach of hostile guns, Cervera believed he could get north unseen, then descending like a select assortment of steel and steam tornadoes on the poorly protected American coast, lay in ashes all the principal cities on the seaboard.

He saw his way clearly to do so. Anyhow he be-

lieved it, and told himself as the flagship made her exit, that it was better at all events to die sword in hand, than like a rat in a hole.

But he had hardly counted on:—first the extraordinary power and capability to manœuvre possessed by the American fleet; secondly, the accurate aim of the Yankee gunners, and thirdly, the utter incapacity of his own.

The Brooklyn lay well to the west, and for nearly a quarter of an hour every shot from the Spanish fleet was directed toward her. And that too from guns as powerful as any in the world.

Had anything in the shape of gunners been behind those guns, the flagship of Commodore Schley would have gone to Davy Jones' locker in ten minutes or less.

"Fire quietly, deliberately," cried Schley to his men. "Don't lose your heads, lads, and don't throw away a single shot."

Even Teddy, who was assisting at a gun, though not aiming, laughed as he saw the enemy's shot spattering about harmlessly in all directions save the right one.

"Sure, it's firing at the sharks they are entirely," he said.

But it was soon after this that Ted was called off.

"I want a young active fellow," said Schley, talking rapidly into his ear, for the din was terrific, "to rehoist the stars and stripes, which"—pointing

upward—"you can see have been shot away. Can you do it?"

"Hooch!" cried Ted. "Ay, sure, and God bless you for the proud and lofty position."

"Off with you, then."

Away went Ted aloft, his life in his hand, and in ten minutes' time the flag of Columbia was once more fluttering in the light breeze. All this time Ted's body had been exposed to the fire of Spanish sharp-shooters. They weren't sharp enough, however, and when he had finished his work he shook his fist in proud defiance at Cervera's ship.

The action brought a shower of bullets and one of these tore through the brave lad's hair. He had no cap and was stripped naked to the waist.

He stood there a few minutes longer to inhale the fresh and balmy air, and to gaze around him at the "hell of battle" that was raging around, at the blue sea southward, and northward at the green and peaceful hills and mountains of beautiful Cuba.

But at the foot of those, white puffs of smoke told him distinctly enough that in the forests and jungles,

"The angel of death had spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed."

Every Irishman is poetical and musical, and Ted was no exception. But he must dream no more up here, so he made haste below.

Commodore Schley nodded his thanks and asked

him to stay with him that he might send a message speedily to any part of the ship. Ted was under fire now with a vengeance, but so, too, was the commodore. If it is a pleasure to sail with so great a warrior, Ted told himself, surely it would be an honour to die by his side.

He prayed with fervour, nevertheless, that America might have the victory, and that heaven might save all his friends.

I am really afraid that Ted added a few words to that last sentence, which were hardly in accordance with the doctrines of Christianity ; they were as follows : " Save us all in this fleet, O Lord ! but smash the foe ; only have mercy on the poor souls av them, if it be souls they have, and not gizzards."

Ted was earnest, anyhow, and mind he was but little more save a peasant boy, though well educated, and turned sailor.

The Brooklyn was, is, and, I hope, long will remain, a splendid fighting machine. And certainly not without beauty-points either. She has a fore and a main, or rather, mizzenmast, and between the two the smoke-jacks rise. She is up to date in every way, and her gun-power is tremendous. With a speed of twenty knots, she can fight as she flies through the air. Her belt-armour (steel) is three inches thick ; deck, three to six inches ; barbettes, eight inches, and turrets, five and a half inches. In her main battery she carries eight eight-inch guns and twelve five-inch ; in her secondary battery,

twelve six-pounders, with field guns, four torpedo tubes and the marines.

Well, our Ted showed no white feather, although his ship was the oftenest and hardest hit of any in the squadron, and more than one narrow escape did he have before this naval action was over.

Nevertheless something happened while he still stood high aloft near the main truck that, had he noticed, would have made him a very happy lad indeed.

The saucy Bonito then, although beyond range, was there and looking on. Adeane himself, through his biggest telescope, had sighted that intrepid sailor swarming up and working so coolly, and was greatly rejoiced when he found it was none other than Ted himself.

"O! O!" cried Aileen, excitedly, when she had a look, "it is dear old Ted. And he is so near. O! could we not speak to him?"

She went rushing away now, and got on to the bridge and waved her handkerchief wildly in the direction of the Brooklyn. But alas! Ted never saw her.

From the New York, although she was not so deeply engaged, a splendid sight of the battle was obtained by Desmond and his friend Ginger.

The latter, I am glad to say, showed not the slightest fear.

* * * * *

To give anything like a complete account of this

great fight would be impossible in a story. Suffice it to say that it was marked by splendid courage on both sides, by excellent manœuvring on the part of the Americans and exceedingly bad gunnery on that of the Spaniards; and that it ended in the complete destruction, by sinking, stranding, burning or exploding, of the whole of Spain's great fleet.

Cervera's own ship was the first to catch fire, for a shell from Ted's ship had exploded right in the admiral's private quarters; another from the Texas did equal duty in the engine-room.

It was a terrible time on board that unhappy vessel, with what remained of her decks a mere charnel house, dead bodies, limbs and heads lying in all directions, and alas! poor men held down by broken pieces of iron to be slowly burned alive.

Of course she lowered her flag, but the smoke prevented the fleet from knowing this, till finally a great white tablecloth was run up, and the firing

"Then ceased, and all was wail."

The *Almirante* was being also badly mauled by the *Iowa*, shells bursting sometimes two at a time in her. Like a dying creature in her death-struggle, she now started forward and away from the claws of the awful *Iowa*, only to fall into the clutches of the *Texas* and *Oregon*.

She headed now for the shore that she might be beached, but the flames had got entire possession of her.

The Viscaya was also torn to pieces and burning as she rushed for the beach at 10:30.

One dreadful shell raked her gun-deck, killing one-half the men instantly and wounding all the others. Such is the tremendous effect of our modern naval artillery.

The Colon gave the Americans a long chase, but she finally succumbed and was chased into, and sank, in comparatively shallow water.

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The fleet being destroyed, all that could be done was done to save the wounded.

Cervera himself was rescued by the Gloucester, and right glad was I to hear it. He is a brave and daring man, and, strangely enough, the very image of my dear friend, the late Admiral John Byng.

This great battle was quite on a par with that fought at Manila in the far Philippines.

And with the loss of their ships, the power of Spain may well be said to have ended both in the West Indies and in the distant Pacific.

CHAPTER XVI

All Things Good and Lovely Wake Again

"So sleeps the pride of former days
When glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts that once beat high with praise,
Now feel that pulse no more."—*Moore.*

I AM not a naval architect, but only an author, yet it must strike even my most juvenile reader, that the greatest barrier to success in a fleet is the want of perfect gunners, and the inability to manœuvre a great fleet with scientific skill.

One cannot help feeling sorry for the Spaniards going down so quickly in their flaming ships. Why was it so?

Woodwork—woodwork! That is the curse of a modern navy. It should be banished entirely. God grant—I pray most fervently—that our Lord's commissioners at home here may lay to heart the great lessons that the American-Spanish war has taught not us alone, but the world.

Give Britain's ships the best steel armour and the thickest, consonant with a high rate of speed.

Give them indestructible means of steering, and the best of guns, and we shall be ready when the

day of trial comes to render a good account of any enemy who tries to insult

“The meteor flag of Britain.”

You will notice, boys, that I do not pray for good officers and brave men.

Why? Because we have them already.

We do not want to boast. That is idiotic. We do not wish to talk jingo, but so long as we have brave and scientific admirals, officers, and men all the way down to the second-class boy whose chief duties are to perform the office of valet to the ship's cat, let us be at least content, and jolly ourselves on with the thought that when war comes, our truly great navy will not be found in any way either wanting or unwilling.

* * * * *

The cruel war is over.

Spain, figuratively speaking, bent her knees and begged for mercy, sued for peace.

“No, no,” said Columbia, gently raising and soothing her, “no, no, Española, fair daughter of an ancient and warlike race, beautiful still in thy grief, to *me* thou must not kneel, but to the Power we both must own. Arise; to err is human, to forgive—divine. Let us reason together and henceforth let there be no hatred between us, no envy, no jealousy. Let us need no longer the crimson light of

war's dread torch, to help us bind the wounds of your bleeding sons and mine. So sister arise, for

“ ‘ Danger's troubled night is past
And the star of peace returning ; ’

and there are happy days yet in store for even thee whom thy rulers, base and reckless, goaded on to the war-path. 'Tis they who should suffer, and not thy brave sons, whose deeds and chivalry in the brave days of old won the wonder of the world.”

And now, reader, our romance of war is over. What care we, boys, for the political portion of it. Nothing in that to attract. I, for one, hate politics and parchment as much as I love music and the sunshine that lights up beautiful scenery, greenery of woodland and forests, misty glens and rugged mountains, and blue of sea and sky.

So let us begone.

“When this cruel war is over.” It was an expression used by poor Beaver many times and oft, and he had meant to do great things and have much fun and general jollity when America at last wiped her sword and sheathed it.

Ah! well the cruel war is over for him, for ever and for aye. Soundly enough he sleeps in his grave beside the forest; he will not even hear the wind sighing among the long, long grass, nor whispering through the woodland foliage. He can not see the glory of the flowers beside him, nor hear the wild bird's song.

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But we will not have him dead. No, he is but slumbering there, and every returning springtime tells us that all things good and lovely wake again.

* * * * *

The seven or eight months following that happy day in the annals of America, when about the middle of August, 1898, peace was signed and the glad tidings wired round the world, were eventful enough to Adeane and to his family.

First and foremost, the bold Bonito crossed the Atlantic on a visit to his estate of Ballymeedin, in bonnie Erin.

He had telegraphed his intention of coming to his overseer and housekeeper, and though everyone was in a great and joyful flutter in consequence, everything was ready and in good order by the time of the arrival.

Ted McCoy had gone back to the hacienda in Cuba, and, with the help of many who were glad to see him, had built himself a hut on the grounds. Captain Adeane had ordered him to await his return there, but meanwhile to answer letters concerning the sale of the plantation which he would, in all probability, receive from America; the large and splendid property being in the market and ready to be knocked down to the highest bidder.

All the others, from Aileen herself to Charlie Chat and Cheese, had returned in the yacht.

And this return was signalised by the tenantry

with great rejoicings, a bonfire on the highest hill, a dinner at the hall with plenty to eat and drink, and a ball to follow.

At this ball—what cared he?—brave Father McDowney was a chief figure. He danced and he sang, and he played old Irish airs that made tears bedim the eyes of more than one fair maiden there.

Next day he and Adeane rode over all the estate.

More than once the captain reined up his horse to gaze around him, silently, but in rapture.

O, what a peace was there! See the silvery rills running onward, singing as they went through many a green and bosky glen, toward the lakes. Those lakes, sparkling but calm beneath the autumn sunshine, were all the world to the tiny streamlets. They were oceans that they should meet and mingle with, never dreaming that there was a far-distant sea which could swallow up these lakes and a thousand such, yet never seem one whit the larger.

And the air was mild and balmy to-day; winter was still far ahead, and hardly, indeed, had the tints that usher in the fa' o' the year, yet tinged the trees with their sunset glory.

"I feel happy here!" said Adeane. "This is our own land, father. I would fain forget its sorrows and its past tribulations, and settle down quietly for the rest of my days. I—I begin to feel just a little tired of life's battle."

"Yes, son, you need rest," said McDowney, "but

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being rested, do you not think you will long to enter the struggle once again?"

"No, no, no, life is worth living in such a lovely land as this. I shall be content when——"

"Aye, when?"

"When I have settled my affairs, father. You and I shall sail for the far Philippines, then to Cuba. We will do everything that ought to be done, and if I have aught remaining this shall be my home. For friend, a humble cottage and little farm will fill all my desires, so long as it is in our own dear land of Erin."

"Spoken like a man and hero; spoken, Adeane, like your good old Irish self—alas! that it should be noble hearts like yours, which England, with its boasted love of 'fair play,' should be doing its best to alienate. The day may come——"

"Hush! hush! Father McDowney. England only treated us badly when she did not know us. She begins to know us now, and therefore to love us. Let the dead Past bury its dead. Erin can afford to forgive even her quondam foes and shake hands across the channel."

* * * * *

The brief visit to the Philippine Islands was made nearly all the way under steam. But it opened Adeane's eyes to the fact that his scheme for making another million or two had been far too Utopian. The country was—and is while I write—in

a terribly disturbed state and howling for independence, though too young and foolish to govern itself.

The company was, therefore, wound up, but—all honour to Adeane—no one was a loser save he himself.

* * * * *

Mrs. Adeane had stayed at home, though all the rest were on board.

While still in Manila, or rather in the bay outside, the captain received a cablegram from New York. It was brief, but to the point.

“Plantation sold. Going back to Pinos. Will wait you there. TED.”

“Well,” said Adeane, as he handed the letter to Father McDowney, “I am relieved of that at last. Thank heaven!”

“I’m glad you’re resigned. Sure enough I am, Captain Adeane. Now you’ll be happy!”

“Yes, McDowney,” cried Adeane. “Shake hands, father. Why, I feel twenty years younger. I am not only happy, but, bless your dear, droll face, my boy, I’m contented.”

Surely dogs know the very inmost thoughts of those they love and take an interest in, for at this moment, Charlie Chat, with his great chump of a head, stood right in front of Captain Adeane and shook out, so to put it, about a score of hoarse barks at him, while he smiled right down both

sides as far as his tail. But up ran Pussy Cheese on three legs,—one paw elevated and ready—and gave Charlie a smack with her gloved hand.

Then off the two went to enjoy the triple delight of a race, a sham fight and a shindy.

As on a previous occasion the Bonito returned by Cape Horn, or rather she passed through the wondrous Straits of Magellan.

It was a long and very delightful voyage. But they made the Isle of Pines at last, and there at the beautiful chalet was Ted McCoy sure enough, and a right pleasant fortnight was passed.

Young Lieutenant Adeane, *alias* our brave young hero, Desmond, was to return to the American navy—indeed he is there now—but he took the opportunity during the time the Bonito lay at Pinos of slipping over to Cuba. First he visited and laid flowers on Beaver's grave, then with a party rode on a visit to the dear old hacienda, which under the auspices of a new company was rising once more, like the fabled Phoenix, from its ashes.

Then Desmond and his cavaliers made straight away through forest and jungle, to the little hacienda in which he had spent what he considered the happiest days of his life.

Nothing was changed, and his "little mother," Babette, ran to his arms with a fond cry and nestled there, as had been her wont.

"And when are we going to be married?" she

said, innocently, many times as the two roamed the wild forests together during his stay.

"Some day, dearest, some day. Your hero, as you call me, shall return and claim his little bride."

And some day, reader, I may tell you in confidence this *is* going to happen, only pretty Babette must be a trifle bigger and older before then.

* * * * *

Back in Ireland, and settled down, is Adeane, so I must lay aside my pen; somewhat reluctantly, I should add, for I begin to love my heroes and heroines whether anyone else does so or not.

Adeane had saved far more money than he reckoned on.

Well he deserves to be happy. He won all he made, and won it honestly, which is more than can be said about many millionaires.

Of course Father McDowney lives on Adeane's estate, and oftentimes, on still and beautiful evenings, after dinner, as they sit together on the balcony with the finest scenery in all Ireland spread out beneath them, do these two talk together of old times, while Adeane smokes calmly the calumet of peace.

Ted McCoy is factor, and seems to live on horse-back.

And a right brave, handsome fellow he **looks**!

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I rather think that—between you and me and the binnacle, reader, hush! don't let it go a foot farther—one of these days Aileen and he will get spliced.

Mind I don't speak with certainty.

I only just—think.

I remain, dear boys,

Thine to the Spine,

YOUR AUTHOR.

THE END.



